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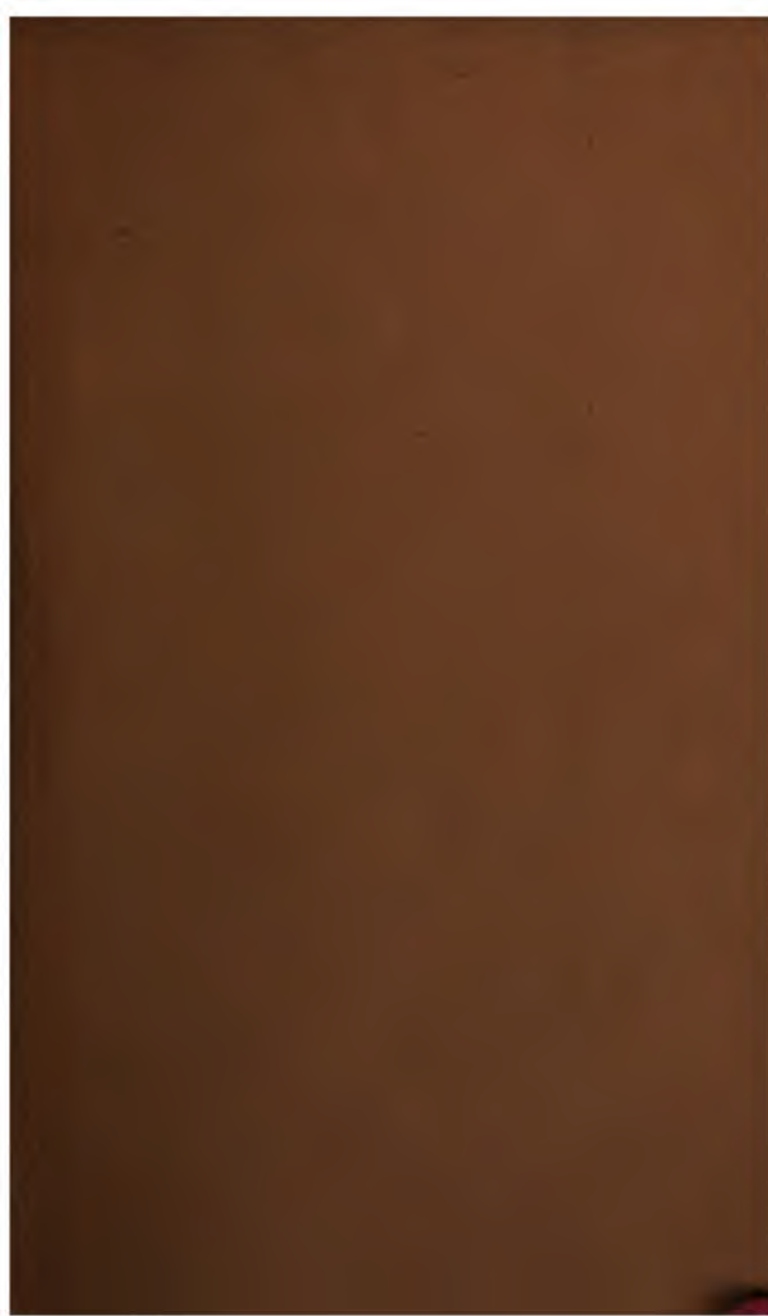
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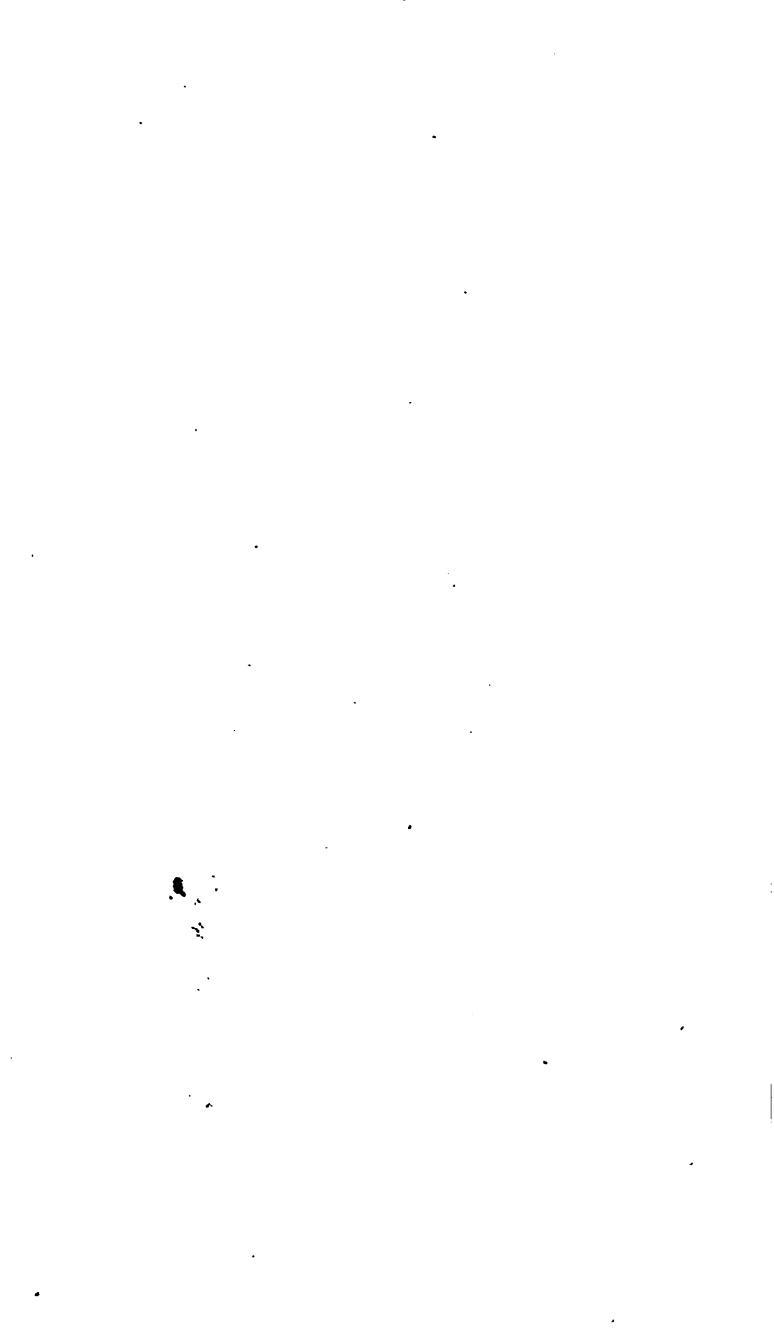


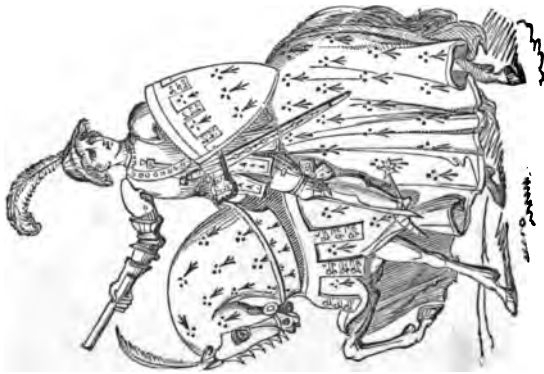


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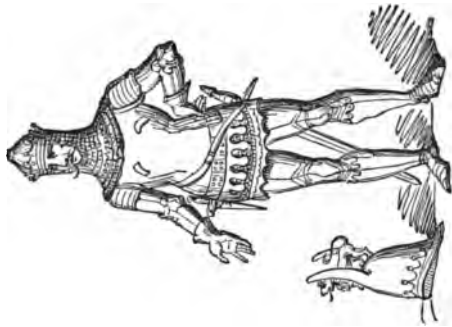
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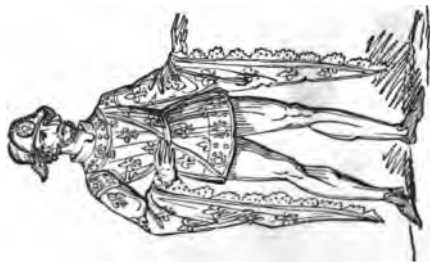




Arthur of Bretagne, constable of France,



and John IV. duke of Bretagne.



John, duke of Bourbon.

A
HISTORY OF FRANCE;

WITH
CONVERSATIONS
AT THE END OF EACH CHAPTER.

BY
MRS. MARKHAM,
AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

FOURTH EDITION.

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**: LETTER FROM RICHARD MARKHAM TO HIS
MOTHER.**

DEAR MAMMA,

I believe I told you in my last letter, that George and I are removed into a higher class; but I forgot to say that one of the advantages of our promotion is, that we are allowed access to a school library of all sorts of useful and amusing books, which Dr. —— has formed for the use of the upper boys. The first book I happened to take out was Turner's Tour in Normandy, a most entertaining book. If you have not read it, pray send for it. There is a great deal in it about the old Norman kings of England, which, thanks to the history of England that you wrote for us when we were little boys, I understood perfectly; but there are also several allusions to French history, which I am obliged to pass over without comprehending; so that I lose a great deal of pleasure. Now, my dear mamma, George and I have a favour to ask of you,

which is, that you will be so kind as to write a history of France for us against we come home at the holidays. For, to say the truth, we both of us feel quite ashamed of knowing so little of the history of a people who are our nearest neighbours, and with whom we have often had so much to do. Pray let me have an immediate answer ; for George and I are very impatient to know whether you will grant us this request. With love and duty to papa, and love to dear little Mary, I am, my dear mamma,

Your dutiful and most affectionate son,

RICHARD MARKHAM.

MRS. MARKHAM, IN ANSWER.

MY DEAREST BOY,

You know that your father and I have no wish more at heart than to promote the improvement and happiness of our children. I shall therefore have real pleasure in complying with your wishes,

as far as my powers and opportunities will permit ; but you must give me more time for my task than, in your impatience, you seem willing to allow : for I shall have many books to read and refer to ; and the more, because the French literature abounds with memoirs, which are not less entertaining, nor indeed instructive, than regular histories. Be assured, however, that I will do my best to make my little compilation worth your acceptance ; and that, if I fail, it will not be for want of industry, nor from a want of desire to give you pleasure.—Accept the prayers and best wishes of your father and mother for your health and happiness, with the kind love of your sister, and believe me ever, my dear Richard,

Your affectionate mother,

*** ***,

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HISTORY OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE CONQUEST OF GAUL BY JULIUS CÆSAR,
TO THE EXTINCTION OF THE ROMAN POWER BY
CLOVIS.

[B. C. 60 to A. D. 487.]



CLOVIS.

BEFORE we begin our history, we will open the map, and take a survey of France. We shall there see what an extensive country it is, and what dis-

tinct boundaries nature has placed around it. The sea, the Pyrenees, and the Alps, including amongst the Alps the great chain of the Jura, almost encompass this fortunate region, except on one side, the side towards Germany.

France thus placed, as you see, in the centre of the temperate zone, enjoys a delightful climate. The air is pure, and is in great measure free from the oppressive heat which is felt in Italy, and from the fogs that are so common in the north of Europe.

Most plants and fruits that can contribute to the enjoyment of man grow in France in great abundance.

It is a land diversified with fertile plains, hills, woods, and rivers; and I believe I do not exceed the truth in asserting, that, of all the known countries of the world, this is, on the whole, the most favoured by nature.

With regard to the inhabitants, it is of course difficult to give a decided character of a nation containing nearly thirty millions of people; but I should be inclined to think that they are in general a cheerful, light-hearted race, of feelings quick and impetuous for the moment, but not deep or lasting. And though many shocking acts of savage cruelty are found to disgrace the different periods of their history, these have, I suppose, been owing rather to the sudden ebullitions of unsubdued and selfish passions than to any habitual asperity of disposition. Indeed I believe that in their common in-

tercourse with one another they are remarkably good-natured and kind-hearted.

But let us look once more on the map. The country, as you see, is now divided into eighty-six departments. The name of each of these departments, with a few exceptions, is taken from the chief river or rivers that run through it. Formerly France was divided into twenty-six provinces. Most of these provinces were, at one time or other, either little independent sovereignties, or principalities dependent on the king as feudal chief. These little sovereignties and principalities were by degrees all merged in the crown, making the king of France one of the most powerful and absolute monarchs in Europe. How all these changes took place, you shall hear in the course of this history.

The earliest knowledge we have of France is from the Romans, who speak of it under the name of Gallia, or Gaul, and describe the inhabitants as a very warlike people, who, in the early times of the Roman history, made frequent incursions into Italy, and even to the very walls of Rome itself. The Romans in their turn made reprisals on Gaul, and 124 years before Christ founded a colony at Aix, in Provence. Provence itself has indeed acquired its name from having been made at this early time a Roman *province*.

Sixty years before Christ, Julius Cæsar completed the conquest of Gaul after a bloody war.

which lasted many years, and is said to have destroyed a large portion of its inhabitants.

Gaul was now reduced to the condition of a Roman province, and was governed by Roman laws. In the reign of Augustus, it was divided into four provinces—Gallia Narbonensis, to the south and south-east; Aquitania, to the west and south-west; Gallia Belgica, to the north-east; and Gallia Celtica, in the north-west, and in the centre. The Romans continued undisturbed masters of this fine territory during two whole centuries; but about the year 260 various nations of barbarians began to make incursions into it, and in 414 the Burgundians and the Visigoths, two nations of Germany, succeeded in obtaining from the emperor Honorius settlements in the southern parts of the country.

The most formidable enemies which the Romans had to contend with were a people who inhabited the districts lying on the lower Rhine and the Weser, and who called themselves Franks; an appellation which it is said they had assumed to express their rooted determination to be *free*. These people invaded Gallia Belgica, and, after a continued struggle of 130 years, succeeded in making themselves masters of a considerable tract of land, and established their capital at Treves.

During this period the names of Pharamond, Mériovée, and many others, have been handed down to us as kings of the Franks. Indeed Pharamond, like our own king Arthur, has been made a hero

of romance, and the name of Merovingian has been given to the race of the earliest French kings, on account of their supposed descent from Mérovée. But the mention of these monarchs in the old chronicles is so obscure, that modern writers have doubted whether they ever existed. It is, however, very certain, that in the fifth century the Franks became a powerful people, and gave the name of France to their conquests in Gaul; and that in the year 458 there was a king called Childeric, who extended his territories to the banks of the Loire. There is even a story, that after a siege of ten years he took the city of Paris.

Paris had been originally founded by the Celts, the most ancient inhabitants of Gaul: Cæsar himself speaks of it by the name of Lutetia; but in his time it consisted of only a few circular huts, built of earth and wood, and thatched with reeds. The Romans adorned it with many noble buildings; and some of their baths, and the remains of a magnificent palace, built by the emperor Julian, are still to be seen. When conquered by the Franks it was esteemed a considerable place, although the whole of it was then contained within the limits of the little island of the Seine, which now forms the centre and smallest part of the present magnificent city.

The Burgundians and the Visigoths were established in Gallia Narbonensis. The Huns, Alans, with other barbarous people, overran Aquitania, and the Romans found themselves reduced to the narrow limits of the country which lay between

the Seine and the Loire, which was called Armorica, a part of which now forms the province of Bretagne. Here they continued for a time to maintain themselves as a separate state.

Gaul thus contained five, if not more, distinct states, each of which consisted of a different people, and kept up a continual warfare with all the others. By degrees the lesser states were swallowed up by the more powerful ones, and in process of time the Franks became sole masters, and gave the name of France to the whole country; but this was not till a long time after the period we are now speaking of.

About the year 500 the little state of Armorica was extinguished by the victories of Clovis, king of the Franks, the son and successor of Childeric, and the principal founder of the French monarchy.

Christianity was introduced into Gaul in the second century. The first Christian bishop was Pothinus, bishop of Vienne.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER I.

Richard. I suppose there are a great many Roman remains left in France?

Mrs. Markham. By much the most celebrated are those at Nismes, where there are the remains of a noble aqueduct, which has now the name of the Pont de Gard. This aqueduct consisted of a great number of arches stretching across a valley, and

supporting a channel for the conveyance of water. Travellers assure us that it must be seen over and over again, to enable one to form any just idea of its grandeur, symmetry, and beauty. There is also at Nismes another very noble ruin, called the Maison Quarree, which was erected by the emperor Augustus to the memory of the two sons of Agrippa : it is still in a state of excellent preservation. All the surrounding rubbish has been cleared away, and the greatest care is taken to protect it from injury, which is, indeed, only what it merits, since we are assured that it is an exquisite model in architecture. There are several arches and other remains of the Romans in the neighbourhood of Lyons, and elsewhere. But one of the most singular vestiges of the great works of that extraordinary people is an amphitheatre of earth, which is to be found in Normandy.

George. That must be very curious indeed : I cannot imagine how a building of earth could have stood so long.

Mrs. M. I was going to explain to you, that this is not a building raised from the ground, but a work formed out of the ground itself. In the centre was hollowed out an arena, and round it were terraces for the spectators to stand or sit, where they might view the games. Unfortunately no care seems to have been taken for the preservation of this singular monument of antiquity ; but the form of the arena and the position and number of

the terraces are still visible. Advantage was doubtless taken of the natural shape of the ground, as in some few other similar cases, which are, I believe, elsewhere to be found.

Richard. Pray, mamma, what part of France was Cisalpine Gaul?

Mrs. M. Cisalpine Gaul was no part whatever of the country called Gaul, properly speaking. It was a tract of land on the Italian side of the Alps, of which the Gauls, before they were conquered by the Romans, had at one time made themselves masters.

Richard. How wonderful it is that the Romans, who were, in a manner, the masters of the world, should have let themselves be conquered by a set of barbarians!

Mrs. M. It certainly is very extraordinary that the power of a great and enlightened people should have been so totally subverted; but, in fact, the immense extent of the Roman empire was one of the chief causes of its destruction. It fell to pieces, as it were, by its own weight. Other causes also conduced to its overthrow; the Romans of the latter times were not like those of the former, but were become enervated by indolence and luxury. From that time, particularly, when the seat of empire was removed from Rome to Constantinople, a general decay of physical and moral power became apparent throughout the empire. The emperors were more like eastern monarchs than the descendants of the

old Romans. The effeminacy of the court spread to the camp, and all classes of the people seemed to degenerate, and to become incapable of opposing any effectual resistance to the inroads of the barbarians.

Richard. Were the Visigoths and Ostrogoths the same people?

Mrs. M. The Goths all came originally from the north of Europe. The names of Visigoth and Ostrogoth were at first merely given to distinguish the eastern Goths from the western.

George. They were very stupid people, were they not? I have often heard stupid people called "Goths."

Mrs. M. It is probable that when they first came from their forests in the North they had no great taste for the fine arts; but I do not believe that they deserved to have their name used as a term of opprobrium. They were indeed the least savage of all the barbarous people who overran the south of Europe. They were governed by a code of laws of their own, and appeared to have made some progress towards civilization. They even encouraged the study of philosophy, and were noted for their kindness and hospitality to strangers. Their *name*, I think, ought to bespeak them some favour, for the word Goth was derived from *goten*, good.

Richard. What sort of people were the Franks?

Mrs. M. They are described as being naturally lively and active, but at the same time impetuous

and restless, and were noted for being the most cruel of all barbarians, and fonder of war than of peaceable occupations.

George. What sort of weapons did they use?

Mrs. M. Bows and arrows were the arms they originally used ; but after their conquests in France, we read of their having a great variety of weapons. They had the *francisque*, a two-edged axe fastened to a short wooden handle ; and their method of using it was to hurl it at their enemies, at the first signal of combat. They had also another very formidable instrument of war, the *angan*, which was a lance furnished at the end with a barbed hook like a fish-hook. Besides these they had swords and darts. They wore very little defensive armour excepting the buckler. Every Frank who was capable of bearing arms was a soldier ; they always fought on foot, except the general or chief, who alone fought on horseback.

Mary. If all the men went out fighting, how did they manage about sowing their corn, and getting in the harvest ?

Mrs. M. As war and the chase were the sole occupations of the Franks, they left the cares and labours of agriculture to their slaves.

Richard. Then the Franks, it seems, had slaves, as well as the Saxons ?

Mrs. M. The prisoners they took in war were their slaves. It does not appear that they trafficked in slaves, or ever made slaves of one another.

George. Why no; they would not then have been freemen or Franks, you know.

Mary. All this is not at all amusing; cannot you, dear mamma, find something more entertaining to tell us?

Mrs. M. Perhaps it may amuse you to hear a description of the way in which the families of the Roman patricians lived in Gaul. The houses were commonly spacious, and contained room for a great number of persons. One side of every house was appropriated to the women, who lived very much apart from the male inhabitants. Every family had a few confidential freedmen, whose business it was to act as upper servants, stewards, and maîtres d'hôtel. All the rest were slaves, and as these people were commonly prisoners of war, and had been torn from their countries and their families, they hated their masters and panted for revenge and for liberty. At night they were chained up like so many wild beasts in their cells, with the exception perhaps of those female slaves who were, or who had been, nurses to the lady of the mansion and her children, and who were suffered to remain unchained; for a nurse, standing in a kind of maternal relationship, was supposed to be too much attached to all the members of a family to wish to murder any of them.

Mary. I am very glad, mamma, that you are not a Roman lady?

Mrs. M. You must remember that I am only

speaking of the Roman families who resided in Gaul, and who were surrounded by a very wild and fierce population, chiefly, I suppose, the descendants of the ancient Gauls. Of their own bondsmen also they were in continual dread.

George. So that, after all, these proud Romans were in fact the slaves of their slaves.

Richard. Pray, mamma, what was the religion of the ancient Gauls?

Mrs. M. The religion of the Druids, which was the same in all respects with the religion of the ancient Britons. But after a while the Gauls intermixed some of the wild fancies of the heathen mythology, which they acquired from their Roman masters, with their own superstitions.

CHAPTER II.

FROM CLOVIS TO THE ACCESSION OF CHARLEMAGNE,

[Years after Christ, 487—741.]



Throne of Dagobert. (In the Museum at Paris.)

WHEN Clovis first became king of France he was a pagan; but on his marriage with Clotilda, niece to the king of the Burgundians, who was a Christian, he and his people embraced Christianity. The manner of his conversion is generally related as follows:—The Franks of Gaul being at war with

the Franks of Germany, the two armies met near Cologne, and, during the heat of the battle, Clovis addressed himself to the God of Clotilda, and vowed, that should he gain the victory, he would embrace the religion which she professed. Clovis was victorious, and kept his vow, if that can be called keeping it, which consisted in following only the outward forms of Christianity, and practising none of its precepts.

The reign of Clovis was a perpetual war. His capital was at Soissons; but even while there, he lived constantly surrounded by his soldiers, more like the general of an army than like a king: or, indeed, I should rather compare him to a chief of banditti; for his soldiers were only kept together by the constant hope and practice of plunder.

In 507 Clovis led his army against the Visigoths, whose chief city in France was Bordeaux, and who were in possession of almost all the country between the Rhone, the Loire, and the Pyrenees. To give this war the apparent sanction of religion, Clovis affirmed that he had God's authority for undertaking it; and this he asserted on the following pretext:—In the church of Saint Martin, at Tours, the book of Psalms was chanted day and night without intermission by priests who were appointed to that service. Clovis sent some of his people to the church, who were to inform him of the precise words which the priest should be chanting at the moment of their entrance. These

words were the 40th and 41st verses of the 18th Psalm: "Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord; but he answered them not." These words Clovis chose to consider as applicable to himself, and he set forwards in high spirits towards Poitiers.

When he reached the banks of the river Vienne, he was at some loss how to convey his army across. The story is, that whilst he was hesitating what to do, a hind, which had been roused from a neighbouring thicket, started from her concealment, and rushing across the river in view of the army, showed the soldiers a ford by which they might pass in safety. The place, I am told, is called to this day "The passage of the hind."

Clovis advanced to the Clain, ten miles south of Poitiers, where he encountered the Visigoths, and gained a complete victory. Bordeaux and the whole province of Aquitania then submitted to him. He was afterwards defeated at Arles by Theodoric, who had established in Italy the dominion of the Ostrogoths, but he contrived to retain the greater part of his conquests.

Clovis died in 511, having reigned thirty years. He was liberal to the clergy, and founded many churches; and on this account the monkish historians gloss over the many acts of cruelty and treachery of which he was guilty.

By his queen, Clotilda, who was canonized as a saint, he had four sons :

Theodoric I., frequently called Thierri.

Clodomir.

Childebert.

Clothaire.

It was the custom among the Franks, that, on the death of their king, his possessions should be equally shared amongst his sons. This arrangement must have been attended with many serious evils, and it also renders the early part of the French history exceedingly intricate and confused. It is scarcely possible to collect from any of the old chronicles a regular detail of events: indeed, at best, they supply us with nothing but a melancholy record of crimes; I shall therefore pass this period over as briefly as possible.

Clothaire and Childebert, in the year 534, made themselves masters of the kingdom of the Burgundians, which extended at this time to the Alps and the Mediterranean.

Clothaire was the survivor of all his brothers, and became sole monarch of France. He put to death with his own hands the children of his deceased brother Clodomir: one only escaped from him, whose name was Chlodoald, and who afterwards became a monk, and founded Saint Cloud, a religious house near Paris, so called to this day, as you probably know.

Clothaire died in 561, after a reign of fifty years.
He left four sons :

Charibert.

Gonthram.

Chilperic.

Sigebert.

The sons of Clothaire shared the kingdom in like manner as the sons of Clovis had done, and their reigns present another half-century of horrible crimes. Chilperic married Fredegonde, a woman of low birth, but of great talents. Sigebert married Brunhault, daughter of the king of Spain. The most violent hatred and rivalry for power subsisted between these two women, which led them to the commission of almost every crime of which human nature, when most perverted, is capable.

Of Charibert little is recorded, excepting that he was the father of Bertha, by whose marriage with Ethelbert, king of Kent, Christianity, as you have probably not forgot, was first introduced into Britain.

Of all the sons of Clothaire, Gonthram was the one least polluted by crimes. He survived his brothers some years, and on his death in 593, the kingdom was divided between his two nephews :

Childebert II. son of Sigebert and Brunhault.

Clothaire II. son of Chilperic and Fredegonde.

On account of the youth of these princes, their kingdoms were at first governed by their two mothers, of whose many crimes I will not shock you

by the recital. Fredegonde died in 596, and her tomb is still shown in the church of St. Germain des Prés, at Paris. Brunhault was put to death by Clothaire II. in the year 613. She was a woman of superior talents, and had a taste for architecture, and there are several buildings in France said to have been erected by her, and which still bear her name.

At this time the name of Neustria was commonly given to that portion of the French territory which stretched from the Meuse and Loire to the sea; and the name of Austrasia to the district which lay between the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Moselle, and of which Metz was the capital.

Childebert II. died in 595, and left two sons, who did not live many years. After their deaths Clothaire II. reigned alone till 628, when he died, leaving his kingdom between his two sons :

Dagobert I.

Charibert II.

Dagobert, by the murder of his brother in 631, made himself master of the whole kingdom. This king bears a high character amongst the Merovingian princes. He was guilty of many atrocious crimes, but they were overlooked in the praise bestowed on him for his justice, which, we are told, he administered impartially, and without being bribed; a greater proof of the vileness of his predecessors than of his own excellence.

France, during the reign of Dagobert, rose to some degree of consideration amongst the nations

of Europe: commerce began to flourish, and gold and silver, which before were scarcely known, now became plentiful. This, however, was but a short gleam of prosperity. Dagobert died in 638, and the monarchs who succeeded him were, either from their youth, or from their imbecility, incapable of taking any part in the government. These kings, who rapidly succeeded each other, and whose line in succession you shall have at the end of the chapter, are often entitled, "*Les rois fainéans*," or "The sluggards." All power fell entirely into the hands of the mayors of the palace, officers whose dignity was next to that of the sovereign. Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy had each their separate mayors of the palace, who all endeavoured to attain the principal power.

In 688 the whole power of the kingdom was usurped by Pepin d'Heristal, mayor of the palace of Austrasia, who merely suffered the reigning monarch to show himself to the people at the great annual meeting of the *Champ de Mars*, keeping him at all other times almost a prisoner in his palace. Pepin died in 714, and his son Charles Martel succeeded him in his office and dignities. He was a man of great valour and activity, and kept the Franks continually engaged in warlike enterprises.

About this time the Saracens, who had before conquered Africa, crossed over into Spain, and won from the Goths a large portion of that country. They next threatened France and advanced as far

as Poitiers ; but their farther progress was stopped by Charles, who, in 732, gained a signal victory over them between Tours and Poitiers, and another near Avignon, in 737. In 737 died Thierri IV., the last of the *fainéant* kings, and Charles no longer thought it necessary to keep up the form of appointing another nominal king ; and at his death in 741, he bequeathed the kingdom, as in absolute right, between his two sons, Pepin and Carloman. Aquitania, however, was not included in this bequest, for that province was governed by dukes of its own, and refused to acknowledge the authority of Charles.

Pepin and Carloman assumed the title as well as the power of kings, and thus put an end to the Merovingian dynasty, or that of the race of Clovis, which had sat on the throne from 481 to 741, in all 260 years. The following is a table of this first race of kings :

Clovis began to reign in 481.

Sons of Clovis.

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Theodoric or Thierri I., | } | Began their joint reigns in 512. Clothaire was the survivor, and died in 561. |
| Clodomir, | | |
| Childebert I., | | |
| Clothaire I., | | |

Sons of Clothaire.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Charibert I., | } | Began their joint reigns in 561. Gonthran was the survivor, and died in 593. |
| Gonthran, | | |
| Chilperic married Brunhault, | | |
| Sigebert married Fredegonde, | | |
| Childebert II. son of Sigebert, | } | Joint kings. |
| Clothaire II. son of Chilperic, | | |

Sons of Childebert II.

| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| Theudebert, | } | Reigned jointly with Clothaire II. till 613, when Clothaire became sole king. |
| Thierri II., | | |

Sons of Clothaire II.

Dagobert I., } Began to reign in 628. In 631 Dagobert became
 Charibert II., } sole king.

Sons of Dagobert.

Sigebert II., } Began to reign in 638. Clovis, the survivor, died
 Clovis II., } in 655.

Dagobert II., }
 Clothaire III., } Fainéans, who bore the title of kings from 655 to
 Thierry III., } 714, and who were under the government of
 Childeric II., } Pepin d'Heristal.
 Clovis III., }
 Dagobert III., }

Chilperic II., }
 Clothaire IV., } Fainéans, under the government of Charles, the
 Thierry IV., } son of Pepin.

The Merovingian kings are sometimes called *les rois chevelures*, or the long-haired kings, from the custom amongst the ancient Franks of distinguishing the member of the royal family from the rest of the people by their long hair, which they wore hanging down in curls over their shoulders, whilst all the other Franks had it cut very short.

Though the crown was hereditary, and in ordinary cases the direct heir had a preference, yet it was not very unusual to set the direct heir aside, and to elect another member of the royal family, who for any reason might be better qualified or more popular.

One of the principal ceremonies in the inauguration of a monarch was to place him on a shield borne on men's shoulders, and proclaim him as king to the surrounding multitude.

In the beginning of the sixth century some na-

tives of Britain fled from the persecutions of their Saxon conquerors, and took refuge on the coasts of Armorica, which from them acquired the name of Bretagne.

These Bretons, although they held themselves subject to the kings of France, still remained a distinct people, were governed by their own laws, and retained many of their own customs. And, notwithstanding the length of time since they settled in France, their posterity still retain the manners and appearance of a separate race.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER II.

Mary. Pray, mamma, will the history of France ever grow entertaining? For so far it does not amuse me at all.

Mrs. Markham. You must have patience, my dear little girl; I think I may venture to promise you, that you will like our history better by and by. I am not surprised that at present you find it somewhat dull. The early part of the history of every country is necessarily uninteresting, from the meagre and scanty details that are left us, and from the obscure and confused style in which these details are commonly written.

Richard. Who was it that wrote the very oldest history of France? and what means are there of

knowing any thing about these Franks and Merovingians ?

Mrs. M. The Chronicles of Gregory, bishop of Tours, contain the most ancient and valuable records of the history of the conquerors of Gaul : he died in 595. And after him the next best guide of the French historians is Frédégarius, who comes down to the middle of the seventh century.

Richard. Were these old chronicles written in French ?

Mrs. M. No, my dear, they were written in Latin : the language we now call French did not at that time exist. The French language has been wrought out gradually, in the lapse of years, from a mixture of the languages which were at different periods introduced into Gaul by the different nations who settled there. The language of the most ancient inhabitants was Celtic ; this under the Romans became mixed with Latin, and from its Roman origin has been called *Romanesque*. The Franks spoke the Tudesque, a dialect of the German. This by degrees became mixed with the Celtic-Latin of the Gauls, which produced another change in the language of the people ; and at last these have all blended together and formed the basis of what we now call French ; but I shall have more to say on this subject as our history proceeds.

Richard. The Romans would hardly know their own language when they heard it with its Celtic mixture in Gaul.

Mrs. M. A Roman would hardly have known

his own language had he heard it in the times we are speaking of at Rome. Pure Latin ceased to be the vernacular tongue even in Italy after the irruptions of the barbarians. It has, however, as you know, been preserved to the learned in books. In many countries the laws were written in Latin ; and Latin was the only language employed by authors.

Richard. Nay, mamma, not the only language : you forgot that you told us in your History of England of a book written in Saxon, as long ago as this.

Mrs. M. You are very right ; I had indeed forgot that very curious record, the old Saxon Chronicle. And this brings to my recollection another very curious book which is written in the Gothic language. It is a translation of the Gospels written in the year 376, by Ulphilas, one of the earliest Christians amongst the Visigoths. This book, or rather the fragments of it, were discovered some time in the sixteenth century, hidden in the library of a monastery in Germany. It is called the *Silver Book*, from having, I believe, some of the letters ornamented with silver.

George. Pray, mamma, did the mayors of the palace live in the palace with the king ?

Mrs. M. The name may reasonably lead you to suppose so ; but if the mayors did live in a palace, it was probably in a splendid one of their own. The office was one of the highest dignity amongst the Franks, and was in reality that of

chief judge and governor of the affairs of the state. The name originated from two old German words, *mord-dome* which meant *judge of murders*. After the Franks were masters of Gaul, and had picked up some Latin words which they adopted into their own language, they Latinised this *mord-dome* into *major-domus*, which the modern French have metamorphosed into *maire du palais*.

Richard. Those Franks seem to have been a very cruel, wicked set of people. Had they no laws for the punishment of crimes ?

Mrs. M. There were laws, though they were not much regarded. In every village there were persons appointed by the feudal lord to administer justice. Sometimes the king himself would act as a judge, and would hear causes and pronounce sentence. Every person, for there were no lawyers in those days, pleaded his own cause. Perhaps one reason why the laws were so ill kept was because they were not generally understood. The Gauls adhered to their own code of laws, which was derived from the Roman law ; the Franks to the law which they had brought out of Germany, and which was called the Salic law, from the name of one of their ancient tribes.

Richard. Is there not something in this Salic law about women, that they shall never be queens ?

Mrs. M. The Salic law permitted the king's wife to have the name of queen, but allowed no woman to govern or to be a queen in her own

right. The Franks being a nation of warriors, all their laws were adapted to a military state, and their lands were always divided into feudal tenures, and held on condition of military service.

George. Then was all France divided into feudal tenures?

Mrs. M. Not entirely; for it should appear that when the Franks conquered Gaul they only appropriated a part of the land to themselves, and suffered the original proprietors to retain some of their possessions on condition of paying a heavy tribute, or fine. These lands a man might consider as his own, and might leave them, if he chose, to his daughters, if he had any; but all the land which Clovis took for himself and his followers he portioned out into feudal tenures; and this land always devolved to the male heir, it being deemed inconsistent with those conditions of service which the feudal system imposed that such lands should be inherited by females. One of the provisions of the Salic law is thus worded: "The Salic lands shall never be the inheritance of a woman, but always of a man." As a king amongst the Franks was nothing more than a military chief, this exclusion extended to the throne, and in the variety of changes and revolutions that have occurred in France during the twelve hundred years since Clovis, this law has always been observed in its original force, no woman having ever yet ascended the throne of France. It is a singular circum-

stance, that although France is the only kingdom in Europe where women are forbidden to reign, yet in no country have they more interfered with the affairs of government, as you will find in the progress of this history.

Richard. Were those persons who held feudal lands always obliged to be soldiers?

Mrs. M. In the first stages of the feudal system they always were; but as society advanced in civilization, this obligation of military service was found very burdensome to the vassal, and not always the most eligible for the lord. It was then often commuted to other services, and in many instances to the payment of certain fines. A very common case was to substitute the condition of furnishing a certain number of knights, in proportion to the quantity of the land held by the vassal. So much land as was bound to furnish a single knight was called a knight's fee.

George. This was something like finding a substitute for the militia, when a man is drawn and does not want to serve himself.

Mrs. M. This tenure was called the tenure by knight's service, and has ceased with the feudal system. The payment of a fine, and sometimes the performance of other conditions, is a species of tenure which subsists to this day, and there are many estates in England held by it. So there were in France also till the revolution.

CHAPTER III.

THE CARLOVINGIAN RACE.

[Years after Christ 741—814.]



CHARLEMAGNE.

From a mosaic, now destroyed, made by the order of Pope Leo III. :

THE division of the kingdom, which Charles had made between his two sons, did not last long. Carloman, in 747, entered a cloister, and Pepin thus became sole monarch.

Pepin, being fearful lest the people should be averse to the total exclusion of the Merovingian family from the throne, gave the title of king to a prince of that race, who is known by the name of

Childeric III. But the nominal sovereignty of Childeric was of short duration, for Pepin, finding his own power sufficiently established, obliged him to retire into a monastery, and caused himself to be proclaimed king before an assembly of the nation, which was held at Soissons. In order to render his person sacred and inviolable, he first introduced at his coronation the ceremony of anointing, and this was done with oil from a phial which it was pretended had been sent from heaven for Clovis's baptism. This phial was ever afterwards preserved at Rheims as a sacred relic, and was always used at the coronation of the French kings.

Pepin was a man of great activity of mind and body, and was much respected by his people, although, from the smallness of his stature, they gave him the surname of Pepin le Bref.

About this time there was a religious war in Italy on the subject of introducing images into churches. The early Christians had permitted them as a means to conciliate their pagan proselytes. At first they were regarded as a help to devotion, but at length they became objects of adoration themselves. A part, however, of the Christian world held this worship of images in abhorrence: they refused to suffer them in their churches; and because of their zeal in destroying them, they acquired the name of Iconoclasts, from a Greek word which signifies *image-breaker*.

Astolphus, king of the Lombards, was of the

party of the Iconoclasts, while pope Stephen III. espoused the cause of the images. In 753 Stephen came to France to implore the aid of Pepin against Astolphus; Pepin the following spring marched into Italy, and obliged Astolphus to make peace with the pope; but, in 755, the war being renewed, Stephen sent to implore Pepin to come again to his assistance, which he accordingly did, and obliged Astolphus to surrender to the church of Rome Ravenna and a valuable tract of territory on the Adriatic, which he had taken from the emperor of Constantinople, and which was almost the last relic the emperors had retained of their western territory.

In 759, Pepin annexed to his own dominions Narbonne and a great part of Languedoc, then called Septimania, which had been conquered from the Visigoths by the Saracens. He also acquired the duchy of Aquitania, after having vanquished and put to death Guiafer, its duke.

Pepin died in 768, leaving two sons, Charles and Carloman, who, according to the custom of the Franks, succeeded their father as joint kings. The brothers agreed so ill together, that a civil war was on the point of breaking out between them; but the death of Carloman put an end to the competition, and Charles, setting aside his brother's children, assumed the whole monarchy. The name of Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, was not given to him till after his death; but we are so much accustomed to know him only by that name,

that it will be the plainest way for us to adopt it immediately. The reign of Charlemagne is a very important epoch. It forms the link between ancient and modern history, and marks the period when learning and the arts were first encouraged in France. The French are indeed universally proud of this monarch; and, if we may believe their chroniclers, with much reason, for they assure us that he was courteous, humane, liberal, laborious, vigilant, and sober, a hater of vanity, and a despiser of flattery. All this may be true; but still, to judge by his actions, I should be inclined to think that his vices very much overbalanced his virtues. But his reigning vice was ambition, and has been overlooked in the brilliancy of his conquests.

Charlemagne's person has been described to us by his secretary Eginhard, who wrote his life, and who tells us that he was considerably above six feet in height, and well proportioned in all respects, excepting that his neck was somewhat too short and thick, which in those days, when the throat was uncovered, was a very conspicuous defect. His air was dignified, but at the same time his manners were social.

His reign, like that of his father Pepin, was a perpetual war. His first enterprise was against the Saxons in 772, and was undertaken chiefly on the plea of obliging them to abandon paganism and embrace Christianity. This war continued with

various success for thirty-three years, at the end of which time they were completely subdued.

In 773, Charlemagne marched into Italy, where he had been invited by pope Adrian I. to protect him against Didier, king of Lombardy, who had succeeded Astolphus. Charlemagne readily entered into this quarrel, for he had already made Didier his enemy by having married and soon afterwards divorced Desirée, the daughter of that king. This enterprise of Charlemagne was completely successful. He besieged and conquered Pavia, the capital of Lombardy, and made Didier prisoner. He had before taken Verona, where he found the widow and sons of his brother Carloman, whom Didier had taken under his protection. Didier passed the remainder of his life in captivity; but history is silent as to what became of the children of Carloman.

The conquest of Pavia was followed by that of the rest of Lombardy, and Charlemagne was crowned with the iron crown of the Lombards, by the hands of the pope. He then spread his victorious arms over Italy, the whole of which submitted to his power, with the exception of that part which now forms the kingdom of Naples, and which was then governed by independent princes, who had the title of dukes of Beneventum. Charlemagne had a great desire to annex this province to his new kingdom of Italy, but the dukes of Beneventum fought hard for their independence, and

Charlemagne after a long struggle was obliged to give up the attempt.

While he was in Italy he confirmed to the pope all the rich gifts his father Pepin had made to the holy see, and added considerably to them.

In 777, Charlemagne turned his arms towards Spain, where he had been invited by some disaffected chiefs of the Saracen conquerors of that country, and he made himself master of a considerable tract between the Pyrenees and the river Ebro, to which he gave the name of the marches of Spain.

As he was crossing the Pyrenees in his return into France from this expedition, he was met at the pass of Roncevalles by a party of Gascons, who attacked the rear-guard of his army to such advantage, that they carried off his baggage, and slew several of his bravest warriors, and amongst others Rolando, his sister's son, a hero who has become famous more through the verses of the poets than from any real merits of his own.

During all this time the war with the Saxons went on. Tassilon, duke of Bavaria, who was nephew to Charlemagne, supported and encouraged the Saxons, and Charlemagne in return entered Bavaria. Tassilon, in his distress, applied for assistance to the Huns, a people who inhabited what was then called Pannonia. They were a nation of robbers; and it was their custom to sally forth in bands and pillage all the neighbouring states, and then to return and deposit their plunder in

large enclosed places, which they called *Rings* or *Ringhes*. The Bavarians, irritated at the rashness of their duke, joined with Charlemagne, and condemned Tassilon to death; but the French monarch commuted his punishment into that of perpetual imprisonment in a monastery, and annexed the duchy of Bavaria to his own dominions. He next attacked the Huns, and after a relentless war, which lasted eight years, he pushed his conquests to the banks of the Danube, and got possession of the *Ringhes*, in which he found treasures and booty, which it had taken above two hundred years to collect.

In 783, Charlemagne's wife, Hildegard, died, and he soon afterwards married Fastrade, a woman of low birth, but of a proud and haughty temper. From this time a great change may be traced in his conduct: he became cruel and vindictive, and his own inclination to clemency was often counteracted by the violent temper of the queen, whose conduct occasioned a disaffection amongst the nobles; and in 789, a plot was in agitation to dethrone Charlemagne in favour of one of his natural sons, named Pepin. The conspiracy was discovered, and most of the conspirators were punished with death.

In 799, pope Leo III., successor to Adrian, having excited the resentment of the people of Rome, they made an attempt to assassinate him. Leo fled from Rome and put himself under the

protection of Charlemagne, who was then at his camp at Paderborn. There is a long account of this interview, written, it is supposed, by Alcuin, a learned Anglo-Saxon, whom Charlemagne had invited to his court, that he might be instructed by him in astronomy, rhetoric, and other branches of learning. Charlemagne received the pope with great respect, and Leo returned, after a time, to Rome, so highly gratified by Charlemagne's conduct, that in the following year he bestowed on him the title of emperor, and crowned him with great pomp and ceremony. Leo by this act threw off the dependence which the popes had hitherto been considered to retain on the emperors of the East or of Constantinople; and from this period there were two empires, the eastern and western, Charlemagne being the first emperor of the West.

The throne of Constantinople was at that time usurped by Irene, the widow of the emperor Leo. Charlemagne being by the death of his wife, Fastrade, again a widower entered into a treaty of marriage with Irene, for the purpose, as he avowed, of uniting the two empires of the East and the West; but while the treaty was pending, the empress was driven from the throne by Nicephorus, who was proclaimed emperor, and thus an end was put to the whole project.

In 804, the Saxons, after their long struggle, were totally subdued. Many thousands of them were massacred in cold blood, and others were

taken from their native villages and carried into Gaul, and dispersed in different parts of the country.

When Charlemagne appeared to have vanquished all his old enemies, new ones sprung up and attacked him on his own coasts. These enemies were the Normans, a people who dwelt on the northern shores of the Baltic, and who under the conduct of a brave leader, named Godfrey, made a descent on France, in the year 807. Charlemagne marched an army to the north of Europe to attack the Normans in their own country ; but finding them much more powerful than he had expected, he was glad to make peace with them and return home.

This great monarch had three sons, Charles, Pepin, and Louis, whom, following the example of many of his predecessors, he associated with himself in his empire, appointing Pepin to the kingdom of Italy, and Louis to Aquitania, Gascony, and the Spanish Marches : not making them, however, independent kings of these countries, but merely governors under him during his life, with the prospect of succeeding to them, as their own, at his death. Charles, the eldest son, had no portion given to him, it being his father's intention that he should succeed to all the rest of his dominions ; but this division of the empire was prevented by the death of Charles in 812, and of his brother Pepin in the following year.

The loss of his two eldest sons afflicted Charle-

magne to so great a degree, that in a short space of time it reduced him from the enjoyment of unusual health and strength to suffer the extreme infirmities of age. He so entirely lost all bodily strength, that he could not walk without assistance. In this melancholy state he shrunk from the cares of government, and wholly occupied himself in works of devotion; and, during the last year of his life, he spent his time in the study of the Scriptures, in prayers, and in acts of charity. At last he fell into such extreme weakness, that he lay for several days unable to swallow anything excepting a few mouthfuls of water. As the moment of his dissolution approached, he gathered sufficient strength to make the sign of the cross with his hand. He then composed himself in his bed, and shutting his eyes, said, "*In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.*" * As soon as he had uttered these words, he expired.

Charlemagne died January 28th, 814, in the seventy-second year of his age, and the forty-fourth of his reign; he was buried at Aix-la-Chapelle, in a chapel which he had founded. Eginhard, who has described the manner of his interment, tells us that he was buried in his imperial robes, with his sword by his side, and his crown on his head, and that he had a golden shield and sceptre at his feet; and that, besides all these things, his Bible and his

* Into thy hands I commend my spirit.

pilgrim's purse, which he always carried with him on his journeys to Rome, were buried with him. But in the year 1001, the tomb was deprived of all its ornaments by the emperor Otho III., who disinterred the body and carried away every valuable relic which he could find. The simple inscription "Carolo Magno" on the pavement is all that now marks the spot where his remains are deposited. A gold cross and a hunting-horn, which are supposed to have belonged to him, are preserved at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Charlemagne had four sons, only one of whom survived him, and five daughters.

At Charlemagne's death, his empire extended to the Ebro on the south; to the Eyder and Vistula, on the east and north; and to the sea on the west; it included all Italy, with the exception of the duchy of Beneventum, the whole of Germany, with what are now called Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, and Prussia; half of Spain, and all France, unless we except the narrow strip of land occupied by the Bretons, who however paid him tribute, and acknowledged him as their sovereign lord.

Before the time of Charlemagne no fixed era was established from which the date of events was generally reckoned: almost every country had an epoch of its own. In the time of Charlemagne the years first began to be numbered from the birth of our Saviour, which is now called the vulgar era, and is universally adopted throughout the Christian

world. An alteration was also made in the calendar about this period. The ancient Franks had been accustomed to begin their year early in March, at the time of their great annual meeting. During the reigns of the Carlovingian family the commencement of the year was changed from March to Christmas. It was not till the sixteenth century that it was finally fixed at the first of January, and in England this alteration did not take place till nearly two centuries after it had been adopted in France. These various alterations and irregularities add, as you may suppose, very greatly to the difficulty of settling precisely the exact date of events.

The Franks, as well as the Gauls, computed time by nights, and not by days: indeed our own terms, *fortnight* and *se'nnight*, seem to imply a similar custom amongst ourselves, a custom which is supposed to have arisen from the pagan worship of the moon.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER III.

Richard. And this, mamma, was the great Charlemagne of whom the French are so proud; I am sure he was not to be compared with our Alfred.

Mrs. Markham. I quite agree with you, my dear boy : we value Alfred because he was a wise king and a virtuous man, while the French boast of Charlemagne because he was a great conqueror.

Mary. I am very glad, however, that he made up for all his cruelty and conquests by being quite good at last.

Mrs. M. Alas ! I fear that a few months devoted to prayer and penitence made but bad amends for so many years of unrestrained violence and ambition. Charlemagne's end, however, is a strong instance of how little all the gratifications of the world can avail at the approach of death ; at that awful moment all human pomps and vanities appear vile and contemptible, and the only substantial good is the remembrance of a virtuous and innocent life, and the hope of a happy and holy death.

Richard. But notwithstanding Charlemagne's cruelty and ambition, there was still some good about him.

Mrs. M. He was certainly a very extraordinary man, especially if we consider the age he lived in ; for at the same time that he was a great warrior, he was also a patron of learning, and an encourager of the peaceful arts, and did more than any other monarch of his time towards the civilization of his subjects. One of the chief things I find to admire in Charlemagne is, his careful economy of time ; he was not only very industrious himself, but he obliged all those who were about him to be indus-

trious also; he began the day with apportioning to his servants and ministers the appointed business they were to attend to; and when this was done, he would, whilst he was dressing, give audience, and hear and decide causes.

Mary. He could not attend much to his dressing, I think.

Mrs. M. His dress appears at no time to have engaged much of his attention. His clothes were commonly of the plainest fashion; and, excepting on great occasions, when he appeared in his robes of state, his dress differed very little from that worn by the generality of the Franks. At one time he wore, as Eginhard tells us, a long flowing cloak; but finding this inconvenient, he adopted the short one, such as was worn by the common people. His under dress was of linen, probably a sort of shirt, over which he wore a tunic bordered with a silk ornament. His legs were covered with a sort of legging or stocking, which fitted close by means of cross gartering. In winter time he wore, in addition to this dress, a vest made of otter skin with the fur on. He was very abstemious in his diet, and seldom had more than three or four dishes placed before him at dinner: he liked roasted meat in preference to any other, and it was the customary ceremony for one of his hunters to bring it up on the spit. I think, my dears, you must acknowledge that I am indulging you with very minute particulars.

Richard. So much the better, mamma ; I should like to know all I can of what Eginhard says about him.

Mrs. M. Well, then ; he says, that while the emperor dined, he had always some person to read aloud to him : among his favourite books were the works of St. Augustin ; he was also very fond of history, more especially the history of Jerusalem, which he often had read to him. Charlemagne liked to have learned men about him. I have already said that he invited our learned countryman Alcuin to his court. He founded the university of Paris, which is said to have been the first university which was founded in Europe. Charlemagne himself made some progress in many branches of learning, but the art of writing he never could acquire, notwithstanding he took infinite pains. He always carried writing implements about with him, that he might practise at every leisure moment : but, as he began late in life, he never could learn to form the letters.

Mary. How odd it was that he had never been taught to write when he was a boy.

Mrs. M. The art of writing was then almost entirely confined to those whose express business it was to be scribes or secretaries. The higher orders of people were never taught to write, and, indeed, scarcely to read. We are told that Charlemagne was very attentive to the education of his children, and had them instructed in all necessary accomplishments ; but when these accomplishments come

to be enumerated, we find that those of the sons consisted of little else than hunting and fighting, and those of the daughters in sewing and spinning. Charlemagne, as you have seen, was a very affectionate father; for his life was shortened by grief for the death of his sons; and he never permitted his daughters to marry whilst he lived, for he could not bring himself to part with them.

Richard. When you came to that part about the battle of Roncevalles, I could not help thinking of the song my aunt Lucy sometimes sings, which begins,

Sad and fearful was the story of the Roncevalles' fight,
On that fatal field of glory perished many a gallant knight.

George. And I, too, was ready to exclaim, from Marmion,

O! for a blast of that dread horn
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to king Charles did come;
When Roland brave, and Olivier,
And every Paladin and peer,
On Roncevalles died.

Mrs. M. The story of the Roncevalles' fight has been greatly embellished by the poets, particularly by the great Italian poet Ariosto: in reality it was little more than a skirmish between the rear-guard of Charlemagne's army and a body of undisciplined mountaineers.

Mary. What made the poets take such a fancy to the story?

Mrs. M. It was first made popular by an old book, which calls itself the Chronicle of archbishop Turpin: this book was written in the eleventh century, and is altogether fictitious, as there never was an archbishop of that name. It is an historical romance, of which Charlemagne is the hero, to whom the author ascribes a great many actions that were performed by his grandfather Charles Martel, and the whole is so mixed up with necromantic inventions of magical horns, winged horses, and enchanters, that it does not even pretend to be a true history.

Mary. Pray, mamma, was Charles Martel a real name or a nick-name?

Mrs. M. Charles was a real name, but Martel was what you would call a *nick*-name. It signified a *hammer*, and was given to Charles after the battle of Poitiers, from the force with which he there *hammered* down the Saracens. Martel was the name of a weapon which the ancient Franks used in battle, and which resembled a hammer.

George. It was better to be called a hammer, like Charles, than to be called Pepin the *little*; for that, I suppose, was the meaning of *bref*.

Mrs. M. Pepin did not seem to like his name any better than you do; and having one day heard some of his courtiers use it in derision, he determined to show them, that although he was little, he was brave and strong: he accordingly caused a lion and a bull to be turned into an arena, and

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asked which of his courtiers would enter the arena and attack these animals. They all declined risking their lives in such a dangerous combat. On this, Pepin entered the arena, and slew them both : he then returned to his courtiers, who never after ridiculed him, because he was not so tall as themselves.

Richard. Pray, mamma, were there any parliaments held in France so long ago as Charlemagne ? and who made and regulated the laws at the time you are now come to ?

Mrs. M. The laws were at that time regulated pretty much by the king's will. The ancient Franks had an annual meeting, at which all the wars for the coming year were regulated, and the tribute due to the king was usually brought to him. These meetings were originally held in March, which was the beginning, as I have told you, of the old French year, and were called Les Champs de Mars ; afterwards the time of meeting was in the month of May, and these meetings were then called Les Champs de Mai. Besides these annual assemblies, there were, in the time of Charlemagne, frequent meetings held by the bishops and nobles, for discussing the business of the state : there were also lesser provincial parliaments for the regulation of the affairs of each province.

Mary. Did they begin to build handsome churches in those days ?

Mrs. M. The churches were, in general, very

humble edifices, excepting in those places where the old heathen temples were appropriated to that purpose : even these had not much interior decoration. Bells were first used in the time of Charlemagne.

Richard. Pray, mamma, what was the beginning of the popes in Rome ?

Mrs. M. To answer your question in full would lead me into a long historical discussion ; I will, however, try to explain, as briefly as I can, the origin of the papal authority. The word pope is derived from the Greek word *pape*, or father ; and is given to the bishops of Rome to express their pre-eminence over all other bishops. A bishop, I need not tell you, is a head of the clergy. Saint Peter is said by the Roman clergy to have been the first bishop of Rome ; and, in allusion to our Saviour's words, that Saint Peter shall carry the keys of heaven, the succeeding bishops of Rome have affected to consider themselves as his successors, and pretend that they also carry the keys of heaven. This persuasion, which has led to shocking abuses, gave wonderful influence to the bishops of Rome in ignorant and superstitious times, and caused them to be regarded as God's vicegerents upon earth. Thus, from a small beginning, the popes acquired great power in every state in Christendom, and often governed despotically the most powerful monarchs.

George. Thanks to our king Harry the eighth,

the pope does not govern us : but can you tell us nothing more about Charlemagne ?

Mrs. M. I think I have told you a great deal ; and I really do not recollect any thing more, unless, indeed, I tell you that he received a present of a curious machine for measuring time by water, as a mark of respect from the Caliph Haroun al Raschid.

Richard. Haroun al Raschid ! I did not know that he was a real man ; I thought he was only one of the people of the Arabian Nights Entertainments.

Mrs. M. He was a real man, nevertheless, and a very great man too : he reigned over the Arabians from the year 786 to 807, and was a most accomplished prince, and a great encourager of learning. It is singular that whilst Europe was plunged in ignorance and barbarism, the Arabians were a polished and intelligent people, and attained to extraordinary pre-eminence in the sciences and in all the liberal arts ; and it was through them, as I shall have occasion to show you in its proper place, that learning found its way into Europe, and (to make use of a common comparison) rekindled the lamp of knowledge, which had been long extinguished. It is still more singular, that whilst the Europeans have, since that time, gone on advancing in a progressive state of improvement, the Arabians, as well as the rest of the people of the East, are exactly in the same state they were in, in the time of the Caliph Haroun al Raschid.

George. I should like to know what these machines were like for measuring time ; I wonder if the wheels were turned by water.

Mrs. M. These clocks I should imagine, from the descriptions I have read of them, were something on the plan of an hour-glass : the water was contained in a basin, which had very small holes at the bottom, through which the water dropped into another basin, the sides of which were marked with lines to show the hours. The water-clock which Haroun al Raschid sent to Charlemagne was, however, on a much more complicated plan : it is described as having twelve doors within it, and at each door was placed a small armed figure, which opened and shut the door according as the hours revolved, and also, by means of some mechanical contrivance, struck the time upon a metal bell.

Richard. I suppose it was like the figures which struck the hours at St. Dunstan's church in London.

Mrs. M. I cannot explain to you *how* it was done ; but probably it was not by means of what we now call clock-work. The first great clock which was seen at Paris was erected in the year 1372.

Mary. I must just say one thing more : you mentioned something about an iron crown of Lombardy ; now, I thought kings never wore any thing but golden crowns.

Mrs. M. I can assure you the Lombards valued their crown as much as if it had been made of

the most precious metals : their kings were always crowned with it.

Mary. I think it must have been a very heavy, ugly thing.

Mrs. M. I must acknowledge that it was not very ornamental, being merely a circle of iron ; however, it may comfort you, Mary, to know that the iron was gilded.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CARLOVINGIAN RACE CONTINUED.

[Years after Christ, 814—884.]



LADIES OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

CHARLEMAGNE had been so much occupied by his foreign conquests, that he had bestowed very little attention on his French subjects, whom he seldom visited. Indeed it is said that he had a dislike not only to them, but also to their country, and to their language, which he would not permit to be spoken in his court. The people of France therefore hailed with joy the accession of Louis, the sole surviving son of Charlemagne, to his father's dominions. Louis had lived from his childhood in

Aquitain, of which province he was king, and had made himself so greatly beloved by his gentleness and sweet temper, that his subjects gave him the surname of le Debonnaire, or the Good-natured.

He was thirty-six years old when his father died. In his way from Toulouse to Aix la Chapelle, where he went to take possession of his father's capital, he was every where received with acclamations of joy by the inhabitants of the provinces through which he passed, who hoped that all the grievances and oppressions which they had suffered during the ambitious reign of Charlemagne would be redressed under the milder sway of his son. But, alas ! mere good temper and good intentions, without the assistance of sense and judgment, will not suffice to lead men to great and good actions ; and in sense and judgment le Debonnaire was, unhappily for himself and his subjects, miserably deficient.

In 816 he received the imperial crown from the hands of pope Stephen V., and the following year he associated with himself in the empire his eldest son Lothaire. His two youngest sons, Pepin and Louis, he made kings of Aquitain and Bavaria.

Hermengard, his first wife, being dead, he married, in 819, Judith, daughter of the count of Bavaria. By her he had a son named Charles, who was born in 823 ; and to bestow a portion on this child, he attempted to deprive his elder sons of a part of the inheritance which he had previously assigned to them. This excited the resentment of

these princes: they rose in rebellion against their father, and the rest of the reign of Louis was nothing but a succession of contests with his turbulent sons. He died in 840, in the sixty-third year of his age, and in the twenty-seventh of his reign. In his dying moments his favourite son Charles occupied his chief thoughts. He had first made him king of Germany. Afterwards, Louis had Germany, and Neustria and Burgundy were given to Charles. Pepin had already died in 838.

The Normans still continued to make piratical attacks on the coasts of France and Flanders.

The Spanish marches were at this period separated for ever from the crown of France, by Inigo, count of Bigorre, who took advantage of the weakness of the government, occasioned by the disturbances between Louis and his sons, to seize on that portion of Spain which afterwards formed the kingdoms of Aragon and of Navarre, and made himself an independent monarch.

The glory of the Carolingian race had expired with Charlemagne. The succeeding branches of his family, by their folly and vices, destroyed the vast fabric of power which their great ancestor had raised, and sank gradually into the utmost contempt. The history of their "decline and fall" is a very unpleasing part of the French history; I will therefore pass it over as briefly as I can.

No sooner was le Debonnaire dead, than Lothaire began to dispute with Charles the possessions which

their father had in his lifetime bestowed on him. Louis, now the second brother, took the part of Charles. They encountered Lothaire on June 25, 841, at Fontenay, near Auxerre; where was fought one of the most bloody battles that ever desolated France. Historians differ as to the precise number of the slain, but they all agree that the loss sustained on that fatal day reduced the country to a state of weakness which rendered it impossible to make any adequate defence against the Normans, who still continued to harass the coasts.

The victory remained to Charles, but his army was too much enfeebled to allow him to reap any advantage from it. At last the three brothers agreed to terms of accommodation, and divided the dominions of their father amongst them.

The kingdom of Italy was confirmed to Lothaire, who had already received the imperial crown from the pope. He had also some portion of the south of France, a part of Burgundy, and that part of Austrasia, or eastern France, which, from the word *Lotharingia*, or land of Lothaire, is now called Lorraine.

Bavaria, and all that is properly Germany, fell to the share of Louis, who is commonly distinguished by the title of Louis the German. Every thing not included in the districts thus allotted to Lothaire and Louis was yielded to Charles, who was crowned king of France by the title of Charles II., to which was added the surname of *le Chauve*, or the Bald.

Aquitain was included in Charles's share, but he did not gain possession of it till 852; that province having been retained by a son of his deceased brother Pepin, who was at last obliged to give it up by his own nobles, who, disgusted at his drunkenness and other vices, delivered him up into his uncle's power.

I must now tell you something of the invasion of the Normans. These people, who had issued originally from the coasts of Norway and of Denmark, had taken advantage of the perturbed state of France to carry on their ravages without intermission. They never sought to acquire territory, but contented themselves with pillaging and destroying every thing near the coast, and then returned to their ships and sailed back to their own country, but only to come again some future time. Their earlier depredations only extended a little way inland; but after they had learned the use of horses, to which it appears they were at first unaccustomed, they were enabled to carry their inroads to a considerable distance, and spread terror into the very heart of the country. The churches and monasteries became more particularly the common object of their attacks, as being the general repositories of the riches of the country. The monks concealed themselves as well as they could; those who could not conceal themselves were murdered, and the survivors generally found, on emerging from their hiding-places on the retreat of the rob-

bers, that their monasteries were a heap of ruins. Besides this pillaging of the churches and monasteries, they commonly destroyed also all the books and records they found there.

In 855 the Normans sailed up the Seine to Paris, which they sacked and plundered, and even carried off the timber of which the houses were built. Charles opposed no resistance to these marauders, but prevailed with them to retire by a bribe of 7000 pounds weight of silver; but this, as you will easily believe, only made them the more eager to return.

In the same year the emperor Lothaire died. He was of a restless and capricious temper, and neither enjoyed peace, nor could suffer others to enjoy it while he lived. He left three sons, who all died young, leaving no children; and Charles without difficulty made himself master of Italy, and was crowned emperor by Pope John VIII.

In 876 Louis the German died, having governed his kingdom with great wisdom and prudence. He left his dominions amongst his three sons, Carloman, Louis, and Charles. Charles the Bald marched an army into Germany in hopes to dispossess his nephews; but he found them well prepared to defend their territories, and in the first attack he was repulsed and put to flight.

Charles had four sons, Louis, Charles, Lothaire, and Carloman. The two eldest proved rebellious and disobedient: the two youngest their father destined to be ecclesiastics, under the idea that the

dedication of his sons to the service of God would be an expiation of his own sins. Lothaire, who was lame, reconciled himself to his lot; but Carloman, being of an active disposition, would not submit to a monastic life. He renounced his vows, and, flying to Belgium, assembled a band of lawless soldiers, and devastated the surrounding country. He was at last taken prisoner, was convicted of having broken his vows, and condemned to have his eyes put out: he afterwards found means to escape from prison, and found an asylum with his uncle Louis the German who was then alive. Carloman, Charles, and Lothaire all died young, and the emperor had now only one son left, Louis, who was of very defective understanding.

In 877 Charles le Chauve was taken ill in his return out of Italy into France, and died in the passage of Montcenis, in a miserable hut by the way-side. His Jewish physician, Sedecias, was suspected of having poisoned him.

An old historian says of this king, that he loved pomp and grandeur; and that "Fortune, in conformity to his humour, made him happy in appearance, and miserable in reality." And this, I doubt not, may be also said of many kings besides.

It was in the reign of Charles le Chauve that the Gauls and Franks first began to assimilate together as one people, and to use one common language.

Louis II., surnamed le Begue, or the stammerer,

reigned not quite two years; and no event of importance occurred during his reign. He died in 879, leaving two sons, Louis and Carloman. A posthumous son was born some months after his death, who was called Charles.

Louis was crowned king of Neustria, and Carloman had Aquitaine; the rest of the dominions of the late emperor were abandoned to the sons of Louis the German, excepting Provence and a part of Burgundy, which were seized on by Bozon, count of Provence, who had married a daughter of the emperor Louis II. Bozon was crowned by pope John VIII., and proved a wise and politic king. This little kingdom of Provence, or, as it is sometimes called, of Arles, flourished for several centuries, and while it lasted, was the focus of all that was refined and elegant in France.

The two young kings, Louis and Carloman, both died premature and accidental deaths; the one in 882, the other in 884.

Charles, their posthumous brother, being only five years old when Carloman died, was considered too young to succeed to the crown: it was therefore offered to Charles, the youngest, and at this time the only surviving son of Louis the German. Charles, who, on account of his corpulence, had received the surname of le Gros, had already received the imperial crown from the pope; and now, with the exception of the newly formed kingdoms of

Aragon and of Provence, reunited the dismembered empire of Charlemagne.

Among the Norman depredators who invaded France at this time, we find the famous Hastings, who also made himself well known and dreaded in England.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER IV.

Richard. I did not know that Hastings was a Norman; I always thought he had been a Dane.

Mrs. Markham. The Danes and Normans were the same people; the name of Norman was a corruption of the word *northman*.

George. It seems to me very strange that the people should let those Normans or Northmans keep coming and coming, and never try to keep them away.

Mrs. M. France at that period was, from one cause or other, nearly destitute of men able to contend with those invaders.

George. What was become of all the fighting men? had they been killed in battle?

Mrs. M. There were men enough, doubtless, still left, but their character and condition were changed. The spirit of the lower sort was broken and depressed: the middle classes no longer exhi-

bited that warlike character that had distinguished the ancient Franks. The nobles, instead of uniting against the common enemy, wasted their strength in petty wars amongst each other, and in engaging in the quarrels and contentions of the royal family. In addition to these causes, we must recollect that a great portion of the landed property of the country was in the hands of ecclesiastics, and cultivated by slaves, who were not permitted the use of arms; all which will easily account for the scarcity of brave men at that time, and for the little opposition which the Normans met with.

Richard. But still, I think, if there had been a king who had either sense or spirit, he might have mustered soldiers enough to have kept out these Norman thieves.

Mrs. M. Unhappily for France, her kings at that time had neither "sense nor spirit." The character of the sovereigns during this disastrous period was equally debased with that of the people. We are told that the peasantry were so completely enfeebled and without energy, that they did not even attempt to protect themselves from the wolves, which, consequently, increased to such an alarming degree, that they ranged the country in packs of two or three hundred at a time.

Mary. Really, poor creatures, what with wolves and Normans, they seem to have been in a miserable condition.

Mrs. M. Nothing conveys a stronger idea of

the terror the people had of the Normans, than the following clause in the church litany which was used at that time: "From the fury of the Normans, good Lord deliver us."

Richard. Even we may say, that *we* suffer from the fury of the Normans; for if they had not destroyed all the books and records which they found in the monasteries, we should have known a great deal more of the history of those times.

George. For my part I don't think such uncivilized times were worth knowing any thing about.

Mrs. M. One chief good of knowing any thing about them is, that we may see what a degraded, wretched being man is when he is ignorant and uncivilized, and is left to the guidance of his passions; and another good is, to make us sensible of the blessing of living in an age like the present, instead of an age when *might* overcame *right*, and a man's will was almost his only law. The French, indeed, were at this time going rapidly backwards. They knew so little even of their own country, that when the three sons of le Debonnaire agreed to divide their father's empire amongst them, they could not attempt to make an equal division till they had first sent persons into all the several parts of it to gain a knowledge of the size, population, productions, and riches of each district. Three hundred persons, we are told, were employed in this service; and as few of them could write or

even read, you may imagine the difficulties they had to encounter.

George. And after all their trouble, I dare say I could tell much better than they, only by just once looking at this map of Europe.

Mrs. M. When we think how very difficult the first steps in science must have been to persons who had no previous helps, we ought to be very grateful to those whose laborious industry has smoothed to us the paths of knowledge. In the times we are now treating of, learning in France, as well as in England, was entirely confined to ecclesiastics, the only persons who could write, and almost the only persons who could read.

George. I thought you told us that there were scribes, or people whose trade it was to write.

Mrs. M. I did so; but I believe I omitted to add that these scribes were always priests. Our knowledge of Charles le Chauve is almost wholly gathered from the account transmitted to us by his chief counsellor, Hincmar, who was archbishop of Rheims, and who appears, even from his own statement, to have been a very busy, meddling churchman. The priests were also poets as well as historians, and one of them wrote a Latin poem in praise of Charles le Chauve; and the better to pay his court to the king, he made every word of his poem, which consisted of three hundred lines, begin with the letter C.

Richard. He must have made strange nonsensical stuff of it.

Mrs. M. I cannot tell you how well or how ill he succeeded; for, in the first place, I don't understand Latin, and in the second place, I have only seen the first line:

"Carmina clarioribus Calvi cantate camenis."

Richard. I think you said that Charlemagne would not allow the French language to be spoken in his court. Pray what language did he speak himself?

Mrs. M. He spoke German, which was, you know, the original language of the Franks. The Gauls, I have told you, spoke a sort of corrupt Latin, which, after the lapse of some centuries, began to be blended with the German spoken by the Franks. But still there were two great divisions in the language of France; for in the south, where the Latin, or, as it was termed, the Romanesque, was the mother-tongue, it varied considerably from that spoken in the north, where the German language had a much greater ascendancy.

Richard. I think I understand you, mamma; that in the south it was Latin with a little German, and that in the north it was German with a little Latin.

Mrs. M. You have explained it exactly; and you will easily comprehend that this would make a great difference in the two dialects. The one

was called the *langue d'oc*, and the other was the *langue d'oïl*, or *langue d'oui*.

Mary. I wonder why they gave them such odd names !

Mrs. M. They were so called from the word in each language which signified *yes*. The Italian was at that time called the *langue de si*, and the German the *langue de ya*, *si* being Italian, and *ya* German for *yes*. But to return to what I was saying about the French languages. The *langue d'oc*, which was that spoken in the south of France, was afterwards modified into the Provençal, which was for two or three centuries the favourite language of poetry, and of which I shall have to speak farther when we come to the time of the troubadours. It is now nearly extinct as a living language, though it still exists, in a certain degree, in the patois, or provincial dialects of the south of France. The *langue d'oïl* is the root or foundation of what was afterwards called the French wallon, which varied very little from the best French now spoken.

George. Were Italy and Germany, and all the other countries where the Carlovingians reigned, as ill governed as France was ?

Mrs. M. The three great divisions of Charlemagne's empire experienced very different fortunes, which may perhaps all be traced to the different characters of their respective sovereigns. The government of France, under her supersti-

tious monarchs, fell almost wholly into the hands of the ecclesiastics. In Italy the nobles, who, by the capricious Lothaire and his inefficient sons, were set over the several towns and provinces, took advantage of the unstable characters of their sovereigns to appropriate to themselves and their families the governments which had been intrusted to them. If you look into the map of Italy, you will see that the country is divided into numberless dukedoms and marquisates, which have all been independent states in their time ; and this was their origin.

The third division, that of Louis, surnamed the German, fell to the share of a just and prudent ruler. Louis, although he was in his younger days implicated in the rebellions of his brother Lothaire, has yet left a name very superior to all the other princes of his time and family. He interfered very little in the quarrels of other states, and had no ambition to extend his territories. He lived entirely amongst his own people, and occupied himself with the care of promoting their happiness. The consequence was, that the countries he governed were rich and prosperous, and the people industrious and contented.

CHAPTER V.

THE CARLOVINGIAN RACE, CONCLUDED.

[Years after Christ 884—987.]



Ruins of the Castle of Montlhéry.

THE French did not make a fortunate choice in their new sovereign. Charles le Gros was not only proud and cowardly, but he also made himself contemptible by his gluttony; nor does he seem to have possessed any redeeming quality. He was very regardless of his subjects, and did not come near them, but left them to defend themselves as well as they could against the Normans, who, in 885, made themselves masters of Rouen, and laid siege to Paris. Paris, although the capital of the kingdom, was an inconsiderable place,

and was at this time contained within the limits of the little island in the Seine, which I have shown you in the map of that city. It had, by the care of a few brave nobles, and more particularly by that of Eudes, count of Paris, been put in a good state of defence, and held out a long siege. At last Charles, at the earnest instance of Eudes, who had gone in person to Pavia, to entreat his assistance, appeared before Paris with his army; but instead of giving the Normans battle, he, as Charles the Bald had done before, bribed them with a large sum of money to withdraw their troops, and then returned into Germany. He soon afterwards fell into a confirmed state of insanity, and was deserted by his servants and driven from his palace, and would have wanted the common necessities of life, had it not been for the compassion of Liutbart, bishop of Mayenne. This unhappy monarch died in 888.

Charles, the posthumous son of Louis le Begue, was now, in the male line, the only one left of the race of Charlemagne. There was, indeed, an illegitimate descendant of that family, named Arnoul, son of Carloman, brother of Louis le Gros. On him, in consequence of the failure of other heirs, the pope bestowed the imperial crown; and he thus succeeded to the German and Italian dominions of his late uncle.

As for France, the youth and the evident imbecility of the young Charles, which obtained for him the surname of Charles le Simple, occasioned

his claims to be once more set aside ; and Eudes, the brave defender of Paris, was chosen king. His kingdom extended, however, only from the Meuse to the Loire. A large portion of the eastern side of France was claimed by the emperor Arnoul ; and Rainulf, a descendant of Charlemagne by a female line, seized on Aquitain.

Even the kingdom of Eudes, small as it was, was divided into many lesser states, which were possessed by independent nobles, who fortified themselves in their strong castles, and lived within them like petty kings. Amongst these the counts of Flanders, Vermandois, and Anjou were the most powerful.

In the year 891, the Normans received a severe defeat near Lovaine, in a pitched battle with the emperor Arnoul ; and after this check they turned their arms on England, thus giving France a respite for the time : but the Normans, or Danes, as we are accustomed to call them, found a more vigorous antagonist in England than they had met with in France. This was our great Alfred, who at that time reigned over the Anglo-Saxons.

After a time the people of France became dissatisfied with Eudes, and complained " that he commanded them to do insupportable things ; " although it does not appear what these *insupportable things* were, unless it was that he required them to stand and defend themselves against the Normans ; and in 893, the count of Vermandois

and the archbishop of Rheims took advantage of the absence of Eudes, on an expedition against the duke of Aquitaine, to crown the son of Louis le Begue.

Charles IV., afterwards entitled, as I have told you, "the Simple," was, at his coronation, only fourteen years old, and his youth and incapacity made him unable to take any part in the government of his affairs. His party was supported by some active and powerful nobles, who, however, merely made use of his name in order to strengthen their own interests against Eudes.

During the next few years the country was greatly disturbed by the contentions of the two rival parties. At last it was agreed to divide the kingdom between the two kings. Eudes continued to rule Paris and its neighbourhood, and Charles's court was established on the banks of the Moselle.

In 898 Eudes died, and Charles was recognised as sole monarch in the whole territory that remained to the crown of France. In 911, after a complete blank in the history for several years, of which there are no records whatever, we meet with the first notice of the celebrated Rollo, a leader amongst the Normans, who appeared on the coasts of France, and threatened to desolate the whole country. Charles, as we are told, offered to cede to Rollo an extensive territory between the Seine and the sea, on condition that he and his people would forbear to molest any other part of France.

He also offered Rollo his daughter in marriage, provided he would become a Christian. Rollo agreed to both these proposals. He and his Normans, who all followed his example, were baptized, and settled themselves in that part of Neustria, which is now called Normandy. Rollo had the title of duke, and was required to do homage to the king of France, and to acknowledge his duchy as a fief of the crown. He was also chosen one of the twelve peers of France.

Rollo kept faithfully the promise of never molesting the other territories of France, and he defended successfully the coasts of Neustria from the future attempts of his piratical countrymen, who in time ceased their invasions. Thus Normandy proved a protection against the Normans; and the cession of that province, which was caused by the weakness of the sovereign, proved, after all, a very politic measure.

Rollo portioned out his new territories amongst his followers in feudal tenures, and applied himself to make laws and regulations. Tradition says that he gave his people a charter, which secured, in like manner with our Magna Charta, the liberty of the subject. He established a supreme tribunal, (a sort of parliament,) and applied himself with an ardour which appears to have been a part of the Norman character, to cultivate and embellish his territory, which had been reduced to the condition of a desert by the ravages to which it had been so long exposed. Under this good government it

became in a short time the most fertile and flourishing province of France. Rollo died in 932, and was succeeded by his son William longue Epeeé*, who was a brave and prudent prince, like his father.

But I must return to the affairs of poor simple king Charles, who exasperated the people of France by his folly, and by allowing a man of low birth, named Haganun, to obtain an undue influence over him. In 923, Robert, brother to the late king Eudes, appeared in arms, and caused himself to be proclaimed king; but being soon after killed in battle, his name has never been enrolled amongst the French kings.

Robert left a son Hugh, surnamed le Blanc, or the Fair, who seemed so little ambitious of sovereignty, that he caused the crown to be given to Raoul, one of the dukes of Burgundy (for Burgundy was at that time divided into three dukedoms), who had married his sister.

Raoul's title was acknowledged by the rest of the nobles, and Charles was confined as a prisoner at the Chateau Thierry. His queen Elgiva, who was sister to Athelstan, king of England, fled for protection to her brother, taking with her Louis, her only child, then a boy about nine years old.

In 929 Charles died, poisoned, as was supposed, by the count de Vermandois. Raoul survived him about six years. He interfered very little

Long Sword.

with the affairs of France, and every thing was under the management of Hugh le Blanc. Raoul died in 935, leaving no children. At last Hugh, after an interregnum of some months, sent a deputation to England, inviting Elgiva and her son to return. Athelstan endeavoured to dissuade his sister and nephew from going to France, being fearful that some treachery was intended towards them. His apprehensions, however, were unfounded. Louis, when he landed in France, was received with the greatest respect by Hugh, who conducted him to Rheims, where he was crowned by the name of Louis IV., to which was added the surname of d'Outremer, or beyond sea, which the English translate "the Stranger."

Louis, both in abilities and courage, was very superior to any of his predecessors since Charlemagne; but he wanted honesty and sincerity, and consequently his abilities were but of little service either to himself or his country.

The German branch of the Carlovingian family had become extinct on the death of Louis, son of the emperor Arnoul; and the imperial dignity was now vested in a German family, the founder of which was Henry the Fowler, a surname which he acquired from having been engaged in the amusement of fowling when he was told that he was elected emperor. This Henry left a son, named Otho, a very active and powerful prince, who raised the dignity of the empire to a higher pitch than it

had known since the days of Charlemagne. Otho had two sisters, one of whom was the wife of Hugh le Blanc; Gerberg, the other, in 939, married Louis d'Outremer.

Hugh, though he had invited the return of Louis, was desirous still to govern the kingdom as he had been accustomed to do; but to this Louis would not submit, and Hugh, being joined by William longue Epée, duke of Normandy, and other powerful nobles, a civil war began, which lasted several years.

Arnoul, count of Flanders, took the part of the king; and having a private quarrel with the duke of Normandy, assassinated him, with circumstances of great treachery. William left a young son named Richard; Louis, under pretence of having him educated at his court, got the poor boy into his power, and would have put him to death at the instigation of the count of Flanders, whose revengeful temper was not contented with killing the father; but the young duke was rescued from the hands of his enemies by the courage and ingenuity of Osmond, his governor.

His rescue was effected in the following manner. Richard, who was at this time staying with Louis in his castle at Laon, was instructed by Osmond to feign himself ill, and to keep his bed. One evening, while the king and all his attendants were at supper, Osmond took the child out of his bed, and, concealing him in a truss of hay, put him

on his back, and pretending that he was going to feed his horse, an office which was then very commonly performed by the greatest nobles to a favourite steed, he carried the child, unperceived, out of the castle. When he had got quite clear of the town, he found his attendants ready with horses: they mounted, and reached the town of Couci in the middle of the night: from thence he conveyed his charge to his maternal uncle, the count de Senlis, who took him under his protection.

The count de Senlis contrived, in 945, by his bravery and address, to make Louis himself prisoner, and would not release him until he had restored several places in Normandy, which, availing himself of the adverse circumstances of the young duke, he had unjustly seized on. Richard was at last fully established in his dukedom. He married Anne, the daughter of Hugh le Blanc, and acquired the surname of Richard Sans Peur, or the Fearless. He is celebrated by the Norman historians for his goodness and piety, and also for the nobleness and beauty of his person; and in his latter years for his long beard and his white hair. Some years before his death he caused a stone coffin to be made, and placed in the church of Féchamp. Every Friday this was filled with wheat, which, together with a weekly donation of money, was distributed amongst the poor. When he died he ordered his body to be placed in this stone coffin, and desired that it might not be buried, but placed on

the outside of the church under the eaves, "that," as his own words expressed it, "the drippings of the rain from the holy roof may wash my bones as I lie, and may cleanse them from the spots of impurity contracted in my negligent and neglected life."

Louis d'Outremer died in 954, from the effects of a fall from his horse, as he was spurring after a wolf, which crossed his road in travelling between Laon and Rheims. He was in the thirty-third year of his age, and left two sons, Lothaire and Charles.

As Charles was only a few months old, the undivided kingdom was conferred on Lothaire; and from this time the custom ceased of dividing the kingdom amongst the sons of the deceased monarch, and was never afterwards revived.

Lothaire, who was only fourteen years old when he began to reign, was for some years under the tutelage of his mother and her brother, who for his sanctity has been canonized, under the name of Saint Bruno. It is mentioned, as a remarkable circumstance, that there was no civil war in France for the space of three years.

In 956 Hugh le Blanc died, having, as his contemporaries said, reigned many years, though without the title of king.

In 973 the emperor Otho the Great died, and was succeeded by his son Otho II. Lothaire, on his uncle's death, claimed a part of Lorraine in

right of his mother, and, without waiting to declare war, marched directly to Aix-la-Chapelle, where the young emperor was then residing. Otho was taken so completely by surprise, that he was obliged to rise from table, where he was sitting at dinner. He mounted a fleet horse, and escaped out of one gate as Lothaire and his army entered at another. Lothaire stripped the palace of every thing in it which was worth carrying off, and then returned to France. This event took place in the month of June, 978, and in the following October, Otho, burning with resentment against Lothaire, set out, as he expressed it, "to return the visit." He proceeded straight to Paris, destroying every thing in his way.

Hugh Capet, the son of Hugh le Blanc, had succeeded his father as count of Paris, and had put the town in such a good state of defence, that Otho found himself unable to effect anything against it; he therefore contented himself with empty menaces. Amongst other things he sent word to Hugh, "that he would make him hear so loud a litany as would make his ears tingle." Accordingly, he posted his army on the heights of Montmartre, which overlook Paris, and there he made his soldiers sing a Latin canticle as loud as they could. The noise of so many thousand voices all bawling at once was so prodigious, that it could be heard from one end of Paris to the other.

Having performed this mighty feat, the emperor turned about to march back into Germany. He reached the banks of the river Aisne without having met with any opposition: it was late when he arrived at the river, and only he himself, with part of his army, could cross that night. The rest were to cross the next morning; but when the morning came, it was found that the water had risen so considerably in the night, that it was impossible for the second division of the army to pass. In this situation it was attacked by Lothaire; and Otho, from the opposite shore, saw his men put to the rout without being able to give them any assistance. At length he procured a little boat, and sent over the count of Ardennes to propose that he and Lothaire should settle their differences by single combat, with the condition that whichever of them was the survivor should succeed to the territories of the other; but the French nobles would not permit Lothaire to accept this challenge, and desired the count to inform his master, that they did not wish to lose their own king; and that, at any rate, they would never have Otho over them.

Some time after this a treaty of peace was made between the cousins, and Otho consented to give up Lorraine to Lothaire and his brother Charles.

In 987 Lothaire died, leaving an only son, Louis V., often called *le Fainéant*, who was of such weak capacity, that although he was twenty

years old, he was incapable of governing, and was placed under the guardianship of Hugh Capet.

Louis V. reigned only a few months, and his uncle, Charles duke of Lorraine, was now the sole male survivor of the house of Charlemagne; but his character was altogether so worthless and contemptible, that the nobles of France excluded him from the succession, and placed the crown upon the head of Hugh Capet.

Thus ended the succession of the Carlovingian kings, which had lasted for a period of 246 years. Never was there a race of weaker princes. By their folly and cowardice they had suffered the kingdom to be so much dismembered, that it was latterly reduced to little more than the mere territory which lay immediately around Rheims and Paris.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER V.

Richard. I wonder why Hugh le Blanc, who seemed to have the giving away of the crown of France, never thought of putting it upon his own head.

Mrs. Markham. He probably thought of it several times; but it is supposed that he was withheld either by the jealousies of the other nobles,

who were unwilling that he should make himself superior to themselves, or else by his own moderation. He is said to have been the greatest man who never wore a crown. He was married three times, and each of his wives was a king's daughter. His first wife was daughter of Louis le Begue: the second was a daughter of the king of England; and the third was sister to the emperor Otho. Hugh left four sons; one of them was, as you have just heard, king of France, and the other three were successively dukes of Burgundy. Hugh had several surnames by which he was indiscriminately called: *le Blanc*, from the colour of his complexion; *le Grand*, from his great height; and *l'Abbé*, because of the number of abbeys he was possessed of.

Mary. Then was he a priest besides all this?

Mrs. M. You may very naturally ask that question. Though not a priest, he yet held several abbeys; for the kings of France were at this time so much reduced, that they had nothing but church property left to bestow, when they wished to conciliate or reward any of their nobles.

George. I could not bear those cruel Normans at first, but now I like them very much, they were such fine fellows.

Mrs. M. They were indeed a very extraordinary people, and greatly superior to most of their contemporaries. Rollo, especially, was, as you say, a *fine fellow*; and one of the finest parts of his con-

duct was his keeping his promise so honourably to the king of France, and giving up all his predatory habits, after he obtained the grant of Normandy. He also established schools, and adopted many of the French laws and customs, in preference to those of his own country. In consequence of his taking these and similar measures, the Normans, in the course of one or two generations, became in manners, customs, and language, assimilated to the rest of France; which seems the most extraordinary, since the Bretons, their near neighbours, were then, and continue to this day, a very distinct people.

Mary. Can you tell us, dear mamma, any more stories about those Normans?

Mrs. M. I can tell you one, which is not very much to their credit. When Rollo was required to do homage to Charles the Simple for his fief of Normandy, he positively refused to comply with one of the ceremonies, which was that of kissing the king's foot; and on being told that it was absolutely indispensable, he still declared that he would only perform it by proxy. Accordingly, he deputed one of his soldiers to go through that ceremony for him. This man, on going up to the king, who was seated on his throne, snatched hold of his foot, and either through awkwardness or insolence, raised it to his lips with such a sudden jerk, that the poor king was thrown off his balance, and fell backwards. The Normans uttered loud shouts of laughter, and the king, terrified by the boisterous expressions of

their mirth, was glad to reinstate himself on his throne without taking any notice of the affront ; and his courtiers were also fain to pass it off as an agreeable pleasantry.

George. What a set of cowards !—When the emperor Otho II. challenged the king of France to single combat, it was somewhat like fighting a duel.

Mrs. M. Duels may be considered as a remnant of barbarism. I am told that there are some traces of them amongst the Greeks and Romans ; but the first we hear of them in modern history is of their having been practised in the court of Gondebaud, king of Burgundy, the contemporary of Clovis. Some antiquaries say, that they were an invention of the Franks. At all events, they accorded with the passionate temper of that restless people. In the reign of Louis XV. the rage for duelling became, with some persons, almost as innocent as it was ridiculous. Challenges were given for the most trifling affronts ; but it was often thought quite enough for the two antagonists to clash their swords together, without offering to wound each other.

Mary. If people must fight duels, I think that is the best way.

Mrs. M. The best way is for people to keep their tempers, and be careful never to give intentional affronts, and then they will be less likely to receive them.

Richard. It seems as if, in the old times in France, all people had nicknames.

Mrs. M. Before the invention of family surnames, it was very difficult to distinguish persons who had the same Christian name, without using some such appellatives. These were generally derived from some personal peculiarity, or particular quality, as Rainier *au-long-col*, or the *long necked*; William *tête d'étoupes*, or *flaxen head*; two names that frequently occur in the history of this period. We have also Henry the Quarreller, and Conrade the Pacific. This last was a Duke of Burgundy, and had the singular good fortune, or good sense, to preserve his country in peace, during a reign of fifty-seven years.

Mary. What a dear old man! How much better off the people of Burgundy must have been than the people of France, with all those quarrelsome kings and nobles.

Mrs. M. The state of society in France underwent a very great change in the tenth century. Most of the principal towns were ruined and depopulated: those in the north by the Normans; and those in the south by the Saracens of Spain, who were perpetually making irruptions into France. The nobles increased in power as the distresses of the middle and lower orders increased; and gaining strength also from the weakness of the sovereign, they became like independent monarchs in their own little domains. Their dwellings were fortresses,

where they lived surrounded by their vassals and dependents, and engaged in petty wars with their neighbours. The foreign trade, what little there was of it, was all carried on by the travelling merchants, who went from castle to castle retailing their goods.

George. Like our pedlers, I suppose.

Mrs. M. But with this difference, that our pedlers bring about with them only inferior and trifling articles, while the itinerant merchants of whom I am speaking dealt in precious stones, silks, ornaments of gold, and spices; and, in short, in whatever was then esteemed rare and costly. There were no shops, but each noble had his own shoemaker, carpenter, and blacksmith, &c., who not only supplied him with whatever he wanted, but also worked at their trades for his advantage and profit. These persons usually dwelt in villages close to their lord's castle, and when any enemy approached to besiege the castle, they all took refuge within the walls.

George. What fine driving of sheep and cattle, and hurry-skurrying, there must have been then!

Mrs. M. And woe betide those who could not reach the gates in time!—However, on the whole, there was not so much harm done as might have been expected: the walls of the castle were too thick, and the towers too high, for the weapons of the assailants to do much mischief to the besieged. The worst they could do would be to starve them into a capitulation; and even should that happen,

the lord of the castle might be quits for some time on paying a good ransom.

George. I suppose, however, the nobles always took good care to have plenty of provisions in their castles, so that they could hold out a long time; and as to water, they always, you know, built their castles in places where they could have good wells.

Mrs. M. And yet the best precautions do not, always succeed. I could tell you of a castle in which there was abundance of wells, and yet the garrison were obliged to surrender because they could get no water.

George. The wells, I suppose, were dry.

Mrs. M. That was not the case: but you shall hear the whole story, although it is a little forestalling the proper order of our history. There exist still in Normandy the ruinous fragments of a castle which was built by our Richard the First, to defend his territories against the attacks of Philip Augustus, king of France. The castle stood on a rock overhanging the Seine, and was considered impregnable. The walls were in some places above sixteen feet thick, and it was large enough to contain several thousand persons. The whole was amply supplied with water, and with every thing that could contribute to the use and security of the inhabitants. This castle was so fine a structure, and stood so majestically overlooking the adjacent country, that Richard, in the pride of his heart,

called it Château Gaillard, and it was considered the bulwark of Normandy.

Richard. Ah, mamma, I saw the other day, in some travels in Normandy, a picture of the ruins of a Château Gaillard. Could they be the same?

Mrs. M. They were indeed; and those desolate ruins are all that remain of what was once distinguished as "the beautiful castle on the rock." But to go on with my story. In the conquest of Normandy by Philip Augustus, during the reign of our pusillanimous king John, Château Gaillard fell into the hands of the French. With them it remained till the invasion of France by our Henry V., who laid siege to this castle. After a blockade of sixteen months, the garrison found themselves obliged to surrender, because all the ropes of their wells were worn out, and they could get no more water.

George. If it had not been our king who took the castle, I should have said it was very provoking. But how came it to be such a ruin as it now seems to be?

Mrs. M. After the English lost all their possessions in France, Château Gaillard reverted to the kings of France, who used it occasionally as a royal residence, and more frequently as a state prison. In the sixteenth century it was altogether abandoned, and then the people of the neighbouring districts, fearing it might be made a harbour for robbers, obtained permission to demolish it.

Richard. Now you have done with all these stupid Merovingian and Carolingian kings, and their tiresome dividing and changing of kingdoms, will you be so kind as to give us only one reign in a chapter? for I think I shall be able to remember the kings much better if they come separately, than I can when half a dozen of them are crowded together. You know you did so in your history of England, when you got past the Saxon kings.

Mrs. M. I am very ready to oblige you, although it will occasion some of my chapters to be very short ones.

George. Never mind that, mamma; when you give us a short chapter, we shall then, you know, have the more time for talking afterwards.

Mary. I shall be glad of that; for, somehow or other, I think our conversations are the pleasantest part.

Mrs. M. To enable you the better to remember the Carolingian kings, I will give you a table of the descendants of Charlemagne.

Louis Debonnaire, son of Charlemagne, emperor and king of France, left four sons.

Sons of Louis Debonnaire.

Lothaire, emperor, died 855.

Pepin, king of Aquitaine, died 838.

Louis, king of Germany, died 876.

Charles the Bald, king of France and afterwards emperor, died 877.

Sons of Lothaire.

Louis the Young, emperor, died 875.

Lothaire, died 868.

Charles, died 868.

} All died without male heirs.

Pepin, king of Aquitaine, son of *Pepin*, was deposed in 852, and died, leaving no children.

Sons of Louis the German.

Carloman, died 880, leaving an illegitimate son, afterwards emperor.

Louis, died 882, } leaving no

Charles the Fat, emperor and king of France, died 888, } children.

Arnoul, emperor, illegitimate son of Carloman, died in 899, and left one son,

Louis, emperor, who died 911, leaving no male heirs.

Sons of Charles the Bald.

Louis II., surnamed le Bègue, or the Stammerer, died 878.

Sons of Louis the Stammerer.

Louis III., died 882, } leaving no children.

Carloman, died 884, }

Charles the Simple, died 929.

Son of Charles the Simple.

Louis IV., or d'Outremer, died 954.

Sons of Louis d'Outremer.

Lothaire, king of France, died 987.

Charles, duke of Lorraine.

Louis V., or *Fainéant*, son of Lothaire, died in 987, and in him ended the Carlovingian race.



Château Gaillard.

CHAPTER VI.

HUGH CAPET.

[Years after Christ, 987—996.]



Norman Ships.

HUGH Capet owed his elevation to the throne more to the peculiar circumstances of the times, than to any extraordinary merits of his own. He was not a man of great abilities, nor of any superiority of character. He seems, however, to have been what is vulgarly called *long-headed*; an epithet which, if I rightly understand it, denotes a medium quality between prudence and cunning.

A few days after the death of the late king Hugh summoned an assembly of nobles at Noyon, chiefly consisting of his own vassals and partisans.

By them he was formally elected king, and he was soon afterwards consecrated at Rheims. During the ceremony, the archbishop would have placed the crown upon his head, but Hugh prevented him, because it had been foretold to him that the crown of France should remain in his family for seven generations; and he thought that if he was not actually crowned, it would prolong the royal dignity in his family to yet another generation. Some historians suspect, that the real cause of his reluctance to wear the crown arose from his consciousness that he had no right to it. If it were so, I own it appears to me a very extraordinary scruple in a man who made no hesitation in usurping every other kingly privilege.

Charles, duke of Lorraine, who was now the only survivor of the Carlovingian family, was not, as I have already said, a favourite with the people of France; and his having accepted of the duchy of Lorraine, and done homage for it to the emperor of Germany, gave them a pretext for setting aside his claims. He, however, determined to assert his right; but not having the means of doing this by force of arms, he had recourse to artifice. Indeed the affairs of this period seem to have been carried on almost entirely by fraud and treachery.

Charles had a half-nephew, Arnolf, the illegitimate son of his brother Lothaire. This man was a priest at Laon, and contrived to admit his uncle secretly into the town. Charles immediately took

possession of the palace, which had been the residence of the latter Carlovingian monarchs, and was proclaimed king by a few of the old friends and retainers of his family. He made Ancelin, bishop of Laon, his chief counsellor ; and he being a very artful man, undertook the office, in the hope that it would give him the opportunity of betraying Charles into the hands of his enemies.

In the mean time Hugh, instead of seeking to dispossess his rival by open force, sought to oppose him with his own weapons, fraud and falsehood. He attempted to detach Arnolf from Charles's interest, by bestowing on him the archbishopric of Rheims. Arnolf accepted of the benefice with many promises of fidelity to Hugh ; but he was no sooner settled in his archbishopric than he received Charles into the city, at the same time pretending that he came without his consent : and Charles, to favour the deception, affected to seize on the new archbishop, and carried him off a pretended prisoner to Laon. Hugh, however, was not to be easily deceived, and resolved, if Arnolf should ever fall into his hands, to be fully revenged on him.

In the summer of 990, Hugh laid siege to Laon, but at the end of some weeks he was driven off by Charles, who made an unexpected sally, burnt his camp, and compelled him to an ignominious flight. Hugh, fearful lest this disgrace should have a bad effect on his affairs, ordered Gerbert, his secretary,

to write as favourable an account of it as he could to the bishop of Treves. I will give you an extract from this letter, to show you that the very useless, because always unavailing, art of putting a false colouring on disagreeable facts, is not an invention of modern times.—“Do not believe too easily the reports you hear. By the grace of God, and by the aid of your prayers, we are still, as before, masters of the bishopric. And of all the rumour which you may hear, this only is true;—that the king’s soldiers being after midday overpowered by wine and sleep, the inhabitants of the town made a sally, which our people repulsed: but during this time the camp was set on fire by a set of ragamuffins, and all the preparation for the siege destroyed. The damage will however be repaired before the 25th of August.”

Hugh did not, however, again attempt to besiege Laon. And Charles believing himself to be in perfect security, gave himself up to ease and enjoyment. This was the time that his perfidious favourite, Ancelin, had so long been watching for; and every thing being prepared, he received Hugh into the town of Laon in the dead of the night. Charles and his queen were taken prisoners in their beds, and were immediately hurried off to Hugh’s strong tower at Orleans, and you may be sure that Arnolf was not left behind. The wife of Charles died very soon afterwards in childbed, leaving two poor little twins. How long these

little prisoners remained in confinement I do not know, nor whether the best days of their childhood and youth were passed in that melancholy tower. We find them twenty years afterwards under the protection of the emperor of Germany. Besides these sons, Charles had two daughters, who, having been left in Germany, escaped sharing in their father's imprisonment. A descendant of one of these daughters married, in 1180, Philip Augustus, king of France, and it is through her that the present royal family of France claim a descent from Charlemagne.

Charles of Lorraine died at Orleans in 994, and Hugh now hoped that he should have undisturbed possession of the kingdom. But although he had nothing more to apprehend from the Carlovingian family, yet the restlessness and ambition of the nobles prevented him from enjoying tranquillity. There were at this time eight powerful principalities or states all independent of the crown: these were Burgundy, Aquitaine, Normandy, Gascony, Flanders, Champagne, and Toulouse. Bretagne is not included, because, in virtue of a grant from Charles the Simple to Rollo, Bretagne was considered as a dependency on the duchy of Normandy. Besides these greater states, innumerable smaller ones were perpetually forming by all those who could acquire possession of any territory, either by fraud or violence; and the monarch found sufficient employment in endeavouring to check the

encroachments of these self-created nobles. One of these, on being asked by Hugh, "Who made him a count?" returned for answer, "Who made you a king?" a question to which Hugh could not easily reply.

In 995, Arnolf being still a prisoner, Hugh bestowed his archbishopric upon his secretary Gerbert. The measure drew upon him the resentment of the pope, who obliged him to reinstate Arnolf, which he did, but without restoring him to liberty.

Hugh Capet died August 29th, 996, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, having reigned nearly ten years. He was twice married, first to Adelaide, daughter of the duke of Aquitaine, by whom he had one son, Robert, who succeeded him, and three daughters. His second wife was Blanch, widow of king Louis V. By her he had no children.

Hugh resided principally in Paris, which from this time became the chief seat of government.

In the same year with Hugh Capet, died Richard Sans Peur, duke of Normandy: he was succeeded by his son Richard II.

The tenth century, which we have now nearly brought to a close, has been named, by some historians, the *iron age*, as being the period when Europe was the most disgraced by murders, cruelty, immorality, and irreligion.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER VI.

Mary. Pray, mamma, why was this last king called Capet ?

Mrs. Markham. To say the truth, you have asked me a difficult question, since antiquaries themselves are not agreed on the subject. Some persons suppose that he was called so from *caput*, a head, because he was the head or founder of a new dynasty. Others assert that the name arose from a cap, called a *capet*, which he introduced.

Richard. Can you tell me whether there were any degrees of rank among the French nobles of those days, or whether they were all alike ?

Mrs. M. Their ranks were very different, but the degrees were regulated, not by their titles or possessions, but by the nearness of their dependence on the throne. Those who held fiefs of the crown, and who were the vassals of, and did homage to the king, were esteemed the persons of the highest rank ; the next in rank were those who held fiefs of the king's vassals, and who did homage to them : these also could parcel out their lands into other fiefs, so that these fiefs and sub-fiefs might be multiplied to an infinite degree : but the vassals or peers of the crown were considered to be of superior rank to all the others, and enjoyed peculiar privileges.

Richard. Then were none but the king's vassals called peers?

Mrs. M. The word *peer* was derived from the Latin word *par*, or equal, and all who were vassals under the same lord were styled peers, not to imply that they were superior to others, but that they were peers or equals amongst themselves. Thus all those nobles, and they only, who held immediately from the crown, were by pre-eminence styled peers of France. There was no limited number of these peers under the feudal system, but in the course of time the number was confined to twelve; six of whom were laymen, and the other six ecclesiastics. Perhaps it may be useful to you to know their names. The six lay peers were the dukes of Burgundy, Normandy, and Aquitaine; the counts of Flanders, Champagne, and Toulouse. The six ecclesiastical peers were the archbishop of Rheims, the bishops of Laon, Langres, Chalons, Noyon, and Beauvais.

George. Was the doing homage a very disagreeable ceremony?

Mrs. M. That depended very much upon circumstances. When a man did homage to his father, or to a friend, the ceremony had in it nothing disagreeable. The form was this: the vassal took off his cap, belt, and spurs, and kneeling down before his lord, placed his two hands within his, and swore to use his hands, his fortune, and his life, in his service. The lord on his side swore

not to oblige his vassal to fight against the king or the church, or indeed to continue under any circumstances in arms more than forty days at a time. There were several other regulations for the protection of the vassal, and the engagement was further ratified by religious ceremonies. On bestowing a fief, the lord either conducted his new vassal to the land with which he invested him, or else he presented him with some symbol or pledge, as a security for his undisturbed possession.

George. It was a fine thing to have no title-deeds, nor lawyers with their long parchments, such as papa had to pay for when he bought the new field, and which I heard him say cost nearly a quarter as much as the field itself.

Mrs. M. And yet I cannot help thinking that your papa would rather purchase the field with all the expenses attending the "*long parchment*," than have it on the conditions formerly required from a vassal to his chief. For, in that case, should his liege lord go to the wars, he must go too. If the liege lord should lose his horse in the battle, he must dismount and give him his own. He must protect his person when in danger. If he should be taken prisoner, he must surrender himself as an hostage for him: he must keep all his secrets, and reveal to him all the machinations of his enemies; and in fine, he would be called upon to defend not only his lord's honour, but the honour of every member of his family.

Richard. Truly, if the vassals were obliged to do all this, they bought their lands dear enough.

Mrs. M. Yet viewed in another light these duties of vassalage were much less oppressive. The younger brothers of most noble families were vassals to their father or elder brother, and to these persons, at least, the ties of duty and kindred lightened the weight of the feudal obligation.

George. Why, to be sure, all that was nothing more than any body would do for his own father or brother.

Mrs. M. One of the most singular parts of the old feudal system was, that the same persons could mutually pay and receive homage. For instance, a duke might receive the homage of a count for his county, and at the same time he might do homage to the same count for a viscounty or fief of that same county. Even the king, notwithstanding that he was the liege lord or suzerain over the whole kingdom, yet was himself a vassal to the abbé of Saint Denis, of whom he held in fief a small territory called the Vexin.

Richard. Do you think, mamma, that the feudal system was a good thing?

Mrs. M. At first, I have no doubt, it was an advantageous compact for both liege and vassal; but at last it gave birth to the most horrible abuses. The nobles became a community of little tyrants, and the country was covered by their castles and fortresses: and there are instances of persons whose

means did not enable them to build any thing better, who yet erected single towers which perhaps they could only garrison with three or four men, but in which they could shut themselves up and wage war against the weak and defenceless.

Mary. And did all this go on till the time of the French revolution, when I have heard that all the nobles were guillotined?

Mrs. M. The power of the nobles began to be shaken in the reign of Philip Augustus, who paved the way by which the monarchs who succeeded him attained at last to absolute power. Some of the worst features, however, of the feudal system lasted much longer. Even down to the time of the revolution there existed in different parts of France some remains of predial servitude. In Besançon and in Franche-Comte, and perhaps in other places, there were to be found peasants whose ancestors had never obtained their manumission, and who had no power to leave their lord's territories without his consent.

Richard. What an artful man Hugh had for his secretary! One would have supposed, from his manner of describing it, that the defeat at Laon was a mere trifle.

Mrs. M. Gerbert, the secretary, was a very extraordinary man. It is therefore the more to be lamented that he lived in the court of such a king, and was entangled in his artifices. Gerbert was a man of obscure birth, but by his wonderful talents

and acquirements he was, to use the words of Sismondi, "like a meteor illuminating a dark sky." When a boy, he had been taken out of charity into the convent of Aurillac, and devoted himself with such ardour to study that he soon obtained the notice of his superiors. He applied himself chiefly to the study of the classic authors of antiquity, and with a success unequalled by any other writer of that period. The superior of his convent gave him permission to travel into Spain, that he might there gain some knowledge of the abstruse sciences as then taught by the learned Arabians in the university of Cordova. Here he made such good use of his time and opportunities, that his fame spread over all Europe. On his return to France his wonderful acquirements, and, above all, his ability to read and write the Arabic characters, gained him the reputation of being a wizard. Both Charles of Lorraine and Hugh Capet employed him at different times as their secretary, and Hugh wished to have made him archbishop of Rheims; but this wish was frustrated, and Gerbert, on being disappointed of that benefice, abandoned France in disgust, and entered into the service of the emperor Otho III., who loaded him with honours. Finally, this Gerbert, the poor monk of Aurillac, ended his career as pope Sylvester II.

Mary. Although Hugh Capet's was but a short reign, you have found, I think, a good many things to tell us relating to it.

Mrs. M. And yet I perceive, after all, that I have omitted a very remarkable circumstance, which is this:—Towards the latter end of the tenth century, France was visited by a dreadful plague. The mortality occasioned by this disorder was very great, particularly in the provinces of Perigord and Limousin. The nobles of these provinces were noted, even in that quarrelsome age, for their perpetual wars and discords; but now, in consequence of this plague, which their own consciences made them regard as an especial visitation of God's anger, they entered into a league amongst themselves, and took a solemn oath to live for the future in peace with each other. The example of these nobles was in great part followed in some of the other provinces, and many of the nobles entered into a solemn engagement, if not to live wholly at peace, at least to abstain from fighting on certain specified days of the week.

CHAPTER VII.

ROBERT, SURNAMED THE PIOUS.

[Years after Christ, 996—1031.]



ROBERT.

THE French historians find themselves exceedingly puzzled to make out a clear account of the reign of Robert. The difficulty partly arises from the want of a regular record of events during a period of some years, which causes a serious chasm in the history, and partly from contradictions and confusion of dates in the scanty materials which are left relating to the other part of the reign. I will, however, make out the narrative as well as I can.

Robert, the only son of Hugh Capet, was in the twenty-sixth year of his age when his father died. He had been previously crowned, as a means of securing to him the succession to the throne, which he now ascended without any opposition. He was, we are told, very handsome, with a finely formed person; his whole deportment was mild and serene, but more expressive of gravity than of dignity. His understanding was not absolutely defective, but he had no enlargement of mind; and with an earnest desire to do right, he was continually committing the greatest absurdities. Indeed the character of Robert was a strange mixture of goodness and folly, and notwithstanding the amiableness of his disposition, he made a very indifferent king. His very virtues became useless by being carried to a pernicious excess. His charity, instead of relieving poverty, was an encouragement to idleness; his lenity was a sanction to vice, and his religion was confined to the mere performance of outward forms and ceremonies, which occupied his whole time and attention, to the utter neglect of the government of his kingdom.

About the year 998 Robert married Bertha, widow of Eudes count of Chartres, and daughter of Conrad the Pacific. Robert had been from his youth much attached to Bertha, and for a short time the young couple lived very happily.

You know, I believe, that the canons of the

Romish church, which were at that time very strictly enforced, forbid marriage even between very distant relations. Unfortunately Robert and Bertha were cousins in the fourth degree, and the pope, Gregory V., sent them an order to separate immediately, under pain of excommunication. Finding that Robert refused to obey, he laid the whole kingdom under an interdict.

Some writers have given us a horrible account of the sufferings which the king and queen underwent in consequence of this sentence. They tell us, that, abandoned by all their attendants, they were left in the solitude of their palace, with no one to perform any menial offices for them, until two poor slaves, who were bold enough to defy the pope's anathema, offered their services to attend on a deserted king and queen, whom every one else deemed it pollution to approach. But these stories are supposed to have been invented by the monks in after-times, in order to alarm the emperor Henry IV., when he ventured to treat with contempt the papal anathema. If so, we may class them with the fables sometimes told by silly nurses to frighten naughty children.

Robert was importuned on all sides to yield obedience to the pope; but still he and Bertha, who were sincerely attached to each other, would not consent to a separation. The monks at last obtained that by artifice which they could not gain by persuasion. Bertha having given birth to a

dead child, the monks made Robert believe that God had signified his disapprobation of the marriage by causing the queen to bring forth a monster, which had, as they pretended, no resemblance to the human form. Upon this Robert consented to a divorce, and poor Bertha retired into a convent and became a nun.

In 1002 Robert married a second wife, Constance of Provence, a princess of a proud and insolent character, and whose habits were totally different from his own. She delighted in show and amusements, and loved to be always surrounded by minstrels and troubadours, and filled her court with the young nobles of Provence, whose dress and lively manners were shocking in the eyes of the king and his grave courtiers.

Robert spent his time chiefly with monks, in assisting them in the services of the church, and in pious pilgrimages to the shrines of saints and martyrs. He was constantly accompanied by a train of beggars; he filled his palace with them, and in imitation of our Saviour's humility, would frequently wash their feet and dress their sores.

While Robert was thus in a manner secluded in the circle of monks and beggars which he drew around him, and appeared totally blind to every thing that was going on elsewhere, Europe was thrown into a ferment by the repeated accounts which arrived from Palestine of the ill treatment which the pilgrims to the Holy Land met with from

the Saracens, who even threatened to destroy the holy sepulchre.

The tide of fury which this intelligence excited turned in the first instance against the Jews, who were accused of carrying on a secret correspondence with the infidels by means of letters, which, it was pretended, were conveyed in the hollow of a staff. In consequence of this vague suspicion, the Jews underwent a terrible persecution; but I believe nothing was done towards the relief of the Christians at Jerusalem, notwithstanding that a crusade against the Saracens was preached by Sylvester II., who was so much animated by his subject, that, although he was then in extreme old age, he astonished his hearers by his eloquence and energy.

In 1002 Henry duke of Burgundy, brother to Hugh Capet, died. He left no children of his own; but having married a widow, his wife's son by her first husband took possession of the duchy. This man, whose name was Otho William, was opposed by Robert, who claimed the duchy as his uncle's heir. Robert, being no warrior, called in the aid of his vassal the duke of Normandy. They together mustered a considerable army, and set out to punish the usurper. All went on well till they reached Auxerre, to which town they laid siege. Near the town stood an abbey, dedicated to Saint Germain, which was garrisoned by the enemy. Robert was ordering an assault to be made upon

it, when he was warned by a priest not to incur the anger of the saint by presuming to attack his cloister. While the priest was speaking, a thick mist rose up from the neighbouring river, which I need not tell you is a very common occurrence; but the royal army chose to regard it as something supernatural. The soldiers called out that it was Saint Germain himself, who was coming to protect the abbey with his buckler: they then took to flight, with the king at their head, and thus ended Robert's first campaign. In the following year he commenced another with nearly the same success. After that he seems to have relinquished his designs on Burgundy. Otho William, after the lapse of eleven years, finding himself beset by many enemies, offered to resign his dukedom to the king, an offer which Robert accepted, and bestowed the title of duke upon his eldest son. Otho obtained for himself the more humble title of count of Burgundy; but with it he contrived to retain all the power and solid advantages which he had before possessed.

Robert had four sons. The eldest, who had been crowned when a child (as was then the custom), died in 1027. The next son was an idiot, and Robert wished to crown Henry, his third son; but Constance, who loved none of her children excepting Robert, the youngest, was desirous that her favourite son should succeed to the dignities of his eldest brother. This was opposed by Robert, and,

in spite of the queen's violence and opposition, he remained firm, and Henry was accordingly crowned.

In 1031, as Robert was returning from a pilgrimage to some of the principal sanctuaries in France, he was attacked at Melun by a fever, which shortly after terminated his life, in the sixtieth year of his age and thirty-fourth of his reign.

He married, first, Bertha of Burgundy, and, secondly, Constance of Provence, by whom he had four sons and two daughters.

Hugh, died before his father.

Eudes.

Henry, succeeded to the throne.

Robert, duke of Burgundy.

Adela, married Richard III., duke of Normandy.

Adelaide, married Bauldwin IV, earl of Flanders.

In 1027, Richard II., duke of Normandy, died. He left four sons: Richard III., his successor; Robert; Mauger, archbishop of Rouen; and Henry, who was illegitimate. Richard and Robert soon quarrelled, and Richard besieged Robert in the castle of Falaise. At last Robert pretended to desire a reconciliation with his brother, and, opening the gates of the town, invited him and his nobles to a banquet. The two brothers now appeared quite reconciled; but very soon afterwards Richard, with all those who had partaken of the banquet, died. Robert was accused of having poisoned them, and was in consequence excommunicated by Mauger. Robert did not attempt any

vindication ; he, however, got the sentence of excommunication removed, and succeeded his deceased brother as duke of Normandy.

He was a man of strong bodily and mental powers, and notwithstanding the dreadful suspicion under which he laboured, he was much looked up to by the princes of his time, and acquired from some the surname of "the Magnificent," and from others that of "le Diable." He was uncle to Edward the Confessor, the greatest part of whose youth was spent in the Norman court.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER VII.

George. I think this same king Robert was the most comical king I ever heard of.

Mrs. Markham. With all his folly he had so much goodness and simplicity of character, that I cannot find in my heart to join in the excessive ridicule which some of the modern French historians attach to his name ; nor can I at the same time consider him as almost a saint as some of the old writers seem to do. He was doubtless much fitter for a cloister than for a throne ; but he had no right to abandon the duties of a king, in order to practise those of a priest.

Mary. I suppose, mamma, you do not mean that there is any harm in doing the duties of a priest ?

Mrs. M. No, my dear. I only mean that no one has a right to neglect those duties which belong expressly to his own station. Robert carried his charity to so great an excess, that he had generally three hundred beggars living in his palace.

George. He should have built an alms-house for them ; he would have found it much more comfortable.

Mrs. M. Indeed I should have thought so, and so doubtless would Queen Constance ; for she, it seems, did not like to be always surrounded by these lazy, dirty people ; and Robert was often obliged to have recourse to strange contrivances to conceal them from her. One day, at dinner, he had one of his beggars hid under the table, and from time to time he popped a bit of meat from his own plate to the beggar. When dinner was over, the beggar was gone, and so also were the gold ornaments from the bottom of the king's mantle, which the beggar had contrived to purloin. Another time, while the king was at mass, he perceived a man busily employed in stripping the gold fringe from the bottom of his robe ; Robert, without moving from his kneeling posture, mildly said to him, "Do not take away any more, but leave the rest for some one whose necessities may be as great as thine."

Richard. I think this Robert was not only king of beggars, but king of thieves.

Mrs. M. It should seem that he not only sanctioned thieves, but that he also taught them how to steal. The queen, who loved show and finery, had presented the king with a splendid lance, which was decorated with rich silver ornaments. As the king was one morning going to church, and carrying this fine lance in his hand, he perceived a ragged-looking man, and beckoning to him to come to him, he ordered him to go and procure some carpenter's tools. When the man returned with them, Robert took him into some snug place where he thought they should not be found out; and there they both set to work to strip the lance of its silver ornaments, which Robert put into the beggar's wallet, telling him to be gone with all speed, lest the queen should see him. When Constance saw her lance deprived of its beauty, she flew into a violent passion.

Mary. Robert was so provoking that I really think the queen was quite right to be in a passion with him.

Mrs. M. I allow that Robert was very provoking; still I cannot think that Constance was *quite right* to be in a passion. Mutual kindness and mutual forbearance is the bond of union and of happiness in every relation of life.

George. Pray, mamma, can you recollect any more stories about this droll king?

Mrs. M. He was, as I have told you, very fond of singing, and he composed a great deal of church music. He once went a pilgrimage to Rome, to visit the tombs of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. While in the church, he placed, with much solemnity and parade, a sealed packet on the altar. As soon as he was gone, the monks hastened to open it, expecting it to contain some splendid offering, and were very greatly disappointed to find that it contained nothing but some of the king's music.

Robert was once desired by Constance to compose a song in her praise, and sing it to her. The king did not feel himself disposed to comply with this request, but he sang a hymn, which began, "*O Constantia Martyrum*;" and the queen, who luckily did not understand Latin, distinguishing her own name, Constantia, supposed herself to be listening to a flattering song written in praise of her own beauty and wit.

Mary. Do you know, mamma, what sort of dresses those were which the queen's young favourites wore, and which the king and the monks did not like?

Mrs. M. I only know what Glaber, an old French historian, says of them. Here is the passage:—"France, because of Queen Constance, became the resort of the natives of Aquitaine and of Auvergne, the most vain and the most frivolous of men. Their manners and their dress were dis-

orderly; the arms and the equipment of their horses were equally strange. On the middle part of their heads they had no hair, and their beards were shaven like Merry-Andrews. Their leggings and their buskins were shamefully fashioned. In short, they respected neither faith nor the promises of peace. But, O, grief! these shameful examples were almost immediately followed by the whole race of Frenchmen, formerly so seemly in their manners."

Richard. How stupid it was in the old historians to make so many blunders in their histories!

Mrs. M. It is not always easy to discover *truth* even in these days, when there is every facility for the acquisition of knowledge. And if we see, as we so often do, facts misrepresented, and false reports circulated, we must not be surprised if we find that a true statement of facts was still more difficult to be obtained at a time, when private letters and chance travellers were the only means by which news could be transmitted from one place to another. There is also another and a very singular cause for the chasm in history, which we have to complain of during one part at least of the reign of Robert. It was generally believed by the Christian part of mankind, that the world was to last only a thousand years after the commencement of the Christian era. As therefore the fatal year 1000 drew near, a general gloom and dread prevailed. The minds of the more serious and

pious persons were filled with the necessity of performing acts of devotion; they founded churches and religious houses; and those who had usurped any of the possessions of the church were anxious to restore them. The gay and thoughtless deeming that the world would last but a short time longer, determined to enjoy what they called its pleasures whilst they could, and plunged into every kind of vice. The nearer the dreaded year approached, the more calamitous was the effect of this general apprehension. The lands were no longer cultivated, all useful labour ceased, and the people thought only of the passing moment. And above all, it appeared useless to record the events of a world that was so soon to end, and we have consequently no knowledge of this period, excepting that which can be obtained from private letters, more particularly from those of Gerbert.

George. But as the world was not destroyed in 1000, what did the people do for bread the following year?

Mrs. M. There must inevitably have been a famine, if it had not been for a most fortunate controversy, something like another which I remember to have taken place about the termination of the eighteenth century. The people could not agree whether the thousand years were to be completed in the year 1000 or in 1001. Those who inclined to the latter opinion cultivated their land yet one more year, and those who had looked for the destruction

of the world in 1000, finding the year pass away, and no appearance of the catastrophe they had expected, took courage, and returned again to the labours of agriculture; and thus the horrors of famine were for this time averted.

Richard. You say, mamma, it was averted for this time, as if the famine came at last.

Mrs. M. It did indeed come at last, and in all its worst horrors, in consequence of an excessively rainy season, which prevented the corn from ripening. We are told that the distress for food was so great, that the bodies of the dead were no sooner committed to the grave than they were torn up and devoured by the famished people. Travellers were murdered, and children decoyed from their parents, and slain for food. A butcher of Tournay was condemned to be burnt for exposing human flesh for sale in his shop.

George. Do you know, mamma, in what year this great famine took place?

Mrs. M. That is a point on which the French antiquaries are divided: some historians place it in the reign of Robert, and others in that of his son. In one thing, however, they are all agreed, which is this, that the harvest which followed after this year of scarcity was the most abundant that had ever been known; a proof, if proof were wanting, of God's kindness to his creatures in thus tempering his chastisements with mercies.

CHAPTER VIII.

HENRY I.

[Years after Christ, 1033—1060.]



Knight arrayed for a tournament.

HENRY, who was a very insignificant character, was about twenty years old when his father died. His mother endeavoured to excite a revolt against him, for the purpose of placing her youngest son on the throne.

Henry, without attempting any defence, mounted his horse, and with a few young companions rode post-haste into Normandy, to claim the protection of the duke, Robert the Magnificent. Robert immediately marched to Paris, and obliged Constance and the nobles, who had joined her party, to sue for peace. Constance retired into a convent, and soon afterwards died. Henry satisfied his brother's ambition by bestowing on him Burgundy; and rewarded the services Robert had rendered him, by annexing to Normandy Pontoise, Gisors, and some other places.

In 1035, Robert being oppressed with the remembrance of his crimes, and especially with that of the fatal banquet at Falaise, determined to relieve his mind, and, as he believed, to wipe away his sins, by going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Feeling assured that he should never return, he arranged his affairs, as well as he could, before his departure. He had one only son, who was illegitimate, and his greatest anxiety was about this child; he wished to make him his successor, but he feared that the stain attached to his birth would defeat his intentions. He, however, took every possible precaution to secure them. He made his nobles swear fealty to the child, and left him under the guardianship of Alain, duke of Bretagne. This boy was afterwards our William the Conqueror. Robert died as he had foretold in the

Holy Land. When the news of his death reached Normandy, Mauger and his brother Henry tried to set aside the claims of the young William; but these were so well defended by Alain, and so heartily espoused by the king, that the endeavours of his adversaries proved unavailing. When at length William became old enough to undertake the conduct of his own affairs, he showed those great abilities, and that daring yet calculating ambition, which so much distinguished him in after life. The king of France, when he saw the enterprising disposition of the young duke, repented of the part he had formerly taken in his favour, and joined with Mauger and his other enemies. But William was now too strong to be shaken; he maintained his power over Normandy, and increased in dignity and reputation.

Henry I. is said to have been three times married. In marrying his third wife, Anne, who was daughter of the czar of Muscovy, he at all events kept clear of the evils which his father had incurred by marrying within the prohibited degrees, since the very name and country of Muscovy was at that time almost unknown in France. Anne of Russia proved a very quiet, harmless queen; she endowed a convent; and is, if I mistake not, enrolled in the list of the French saints. As for Henry, he became every year of his life more and more contemptible, and seems almost to have been overlooked

and forgotten by the historians of this period. He died in 1060, leaving three sons, by Anne of Muscovy :

Philip, who succeeded him.

Robert, died young.

Hugh, count of Vermandois.

During this reign some of the great nobles arrived at a degree of power which eclipsed that of the king. The counts of Toulouse, of Flanders, and of Anjou, were amongst the most powerful. The count of Champagne and Blois, son of Bertha (king Robert's first wife), was another very distinguished nobleman. In 1037 he fought a bloody battle at Bar-le-duc with his cousin the emperor Conrad, for the succession to the territories of their grandfather, Conrad the Pacific, whose son had lately died without children. The count of Champagne was slain; he left two sons : the eldest inherited the earldom of Champagne, and the youngest succeeded to that of Blois, and was the ancestor of our king Stephen.

During a long period the affairs of the Gallican church had been in great disorder. The monks had many of them broken their vows of celibacy, and had quitted their convents. The benefices of the church were sold to the highest bidder, and frequently fell into the hands of laymen. This abuse was not confined to France, it extended to Italy, where even the papal crown was put up to

sale, and was at one time placed on the head of a boy of ten years old, who was made pope by the name of Benedict IX. The necessity of a reform in the ecclesiastical order became every day more and more apparent. At last, in 1050, the emperor Henry III. raised to the papal throne Bruno, a man of known sanctity. He took the name of Leo IX. In 1055 he came to Rheims and convened a council, at which all the prelates of France were summoned to appear, and those who were proved to have been guilty of simony were deprived of their benefices.

The corruptions in the church gave rise to many sects of heretics. Amongst the fancies of one of these sects was that of uniting the practice of frequent fasting with an entire abstinence from animal food. The consequence of this spare diet was a peculiarly pallid complexion, which was considered as such a certain symbol of the sect, that we are told that even good catholics who were so unlucky as to have pale faces were liable to the danger of being dragged to the stake, and burnt as heretics.

In 1042, Edward, surnamed the Confessor, was recalled from his exile in Normandy to take possession of the throne of England, then vacant by the death of Harold Harefoot the son of Canute.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER VIII.

Richard. The reign of Henry I. is not nearly so entertaining as the reign of Robert.

Mrs. Markham. It is certainly barren of great or brilliant events, but it was nevertheless a very important period to the French nation; and the people during the reign of this king made more rapid strides towards improvement than they had ever before done.

George. It must have been the people's own doing then, for the king did not seem endued with much spirit of improvement.

Mrs. M. You, George, who are so fond of talking of knights and of knight-errantry, will be delighted to hear that this improvement of the people was in a great measure owing to the institution of chivalry, which arose about this period. The spirit of chivalry is, as you know, high-minded and honourable; and it had the effect of elevating the national character of the French from the hardness and brutality of barbarism. Though no doubt frequently carried to a romantic and absurd extreme, yet it gave the first impulse to that true, gentlemanly feeling which forms the charm and excellence of all well-bred society.

Richard. I wonder how chivalry was first thought of.

Mrs. M. Some antiquaries assert that traces

of it can be found in the primitive customs of the Franks ; and that when their youths were first presented with manly weapons they were made to swear that they would use them valiantly, and would never disgrace their tribe ; but the more common opinion is, that the origin of chivalry is of much later date, and that it arose in the beginning of the eleventh century, from the piety of certain nobles, who desirous to give a religious tendency to the profession of arms, consecrated their swords to the service of God, and took a solemn oath to use them only in the cause of the weak and of the oppressed. And this is supposed to have lighted the spark of that chivalrous flame which spread like wild-fire from one end of Europe to the other.

With regard to the ceremonial part of chivalry, we hardly know its precise original ; but as some of the laws and regulations are very singular, you may be glad to have them described. When a nobleman (for only men of noble birth could be admitted into the order) was to be made a knight, the ceremony began by placing him in a bath, as if to express that in presenting himself for knighthood he presented himself washed from his sins. When he left the bath he was clothed first in a white tunic, then in a crimson vest, and lastly in a sable coat of mail ; each of which had its symbolical meaning. The white tunic signified

the purity of the life which he was now vowing to lead; the crimson vest, the blood he would be called on to shed; and the black armour was an emblem of death, for which he was always to be prepared. His dress was then completed by a belt, which was intended as the symbol of chastity, and by a pair of spurs, which were to denote his readiness to hasten wherever duty called him. Lastly, his sword was girded on, and this part of the ceremony was accompanied by an exhortation to be brave and loyal. The whole then concluded by a stroke on the shoulder from the flat of a sword; and this was always given by one who was already a knight, and was meant as a sort of impressive memento which should infix strongly on the mind of the new knight the solemn engagements he had entered into.

George. The being a knight was a much more serious thing than I had supposed. I think those rough old barons must have found it rather difficult to become accomplished knights all at once.

Mrs. M. When chivalry was thoroughly established, almost every youth of high birth was early trained to knighthood, by being domesticated in the castle of some great lord, where he was instructed in all the observances of chivalry.

Mary. Then were there schools and schoolmasters in these castles?

Mrs. M. The education of boys was conducted very differently then from what it is now. The

young nobles had little to do with books, and instead of learning lessons, had to learn how to take care of their horses, and how to clean their arms; and their business was to attend upon the lord of the castle, as if they had been his servants.

George. I suppose they only pretended to be his servants just for form's sake.

Mrs. M. I can assure you it was not at all for mere form's sake. These youths of quality had to execute many domestic services in the families in which they resided. They assisted their lord when he dressed, they waited on him and his lady at table, they attended him when he rode out, and in short obeyed him in everything.

Mary. Then did these young noblemen dine in the servants' hall?

Mrs. M. Formerly there were no servants' halls. The whole family in a French, as in an English castle, dined together; a large saltcellar was placed in the middle of the table, to make a division between the upper end, where the lord sat with his guests, and that part which was occupied by the menials.

Mary. But what I wanted to know, mamma, was whether these boys were considered as servants or gentlemen.

Mrs. M. They did not associate with the domestics of the family, but were the companions of the baron's sons; and when they were not in attendance upon their lord, they used to spend their

mornings in military sports in the castle yard, and in the evening they joined in the music, dancing, and other amusements of the ladies of the castle.

George. I dare say they led very pleasant lives.

Richard. I don't think I should have liked it. It must have been very disagreeable to have been half servant and half gentleman.

Mrs. M. We should now think it a very lounging, idle kind of life for a young man; but at that time, when there were no schools or colleges, excepting for those who were designed for the profession of the church, there was no better mode of education for the young nobility; and as they were required to conduct themselves with great respect towards the lord and the ladies of the castle, they acquired, at all events, some civilization and polish.

Richard. Did all this chivalry make any difference in the manners or condition of the lower classes?

Mrs. M. The same cause that improved the higher orders contributed to advance the condition of all the others. The spirit of chivalry, while it refined the nobles, at the same time introduced amongst them habits of expense, that gave a stimulus to industry. Trade was increased; talent and invention were encouraged; the traffic of the country was no longer confined to roving pedlars; the towns were again peopled; the streets were

filled with shops and warehouses; and the merchants became rich, and were enabled to engage in foreign commerce.

Mary. Did the nobles, then, when they became knights, want so many more things than they had before?

Mrs. M. Knighthood certainly introduced a more costly style of dress, of armour, and of all sorts of equipment. In all these the knights vied with each other, and also, in like manner, in the number of their attendants, and in the size and architecture of their castles.

Richard. Then do you think, mamma, it is a good thing for people to be extravagant?

Mrs. M. Extravagance and penuriousness are both equally wrong; the golden mean lies between the two extremes. I shall show you, in the next reign, what serious evils the expensive habits of the nobles produced. But almost any thing is better than the brutal indolence of men unambitious either of excellence or of distinction; and it is certain that even the vanities which came in the train of chivalry had the effect of improving the condition of the towns, the inhabitants of which became persons of importance from their wealth, although their political condition continued to be still that of serfs.

Richard. Was there any change made in the condition of the farmers and country people?

Mrs. M. They still remained in a state of

rassalage; and as they were obliged to work for the benefit of their masters, instead of their own, they had not the means of getting rich like the townspeople. Still I trust the hardships of their condition were a little meliorated. I mentioned to you before, that about the end of the tenth century, after a dreadful plague in Perigord and the Limousin, the nobles entered into a pacific league with each other. This league was frequently renewed and enforced, particularly about 1035 and afterwards, and had the title given it of the *peace of God*, and of *God's truce*. It contained an especial clause for the protection of the lower classes; namely, that no one should molest the labourers in the fields, neither deprive them of their implements of husbandry, nor injure their persons.

George. Those were shocking times in which such clauses could be required. I recollect, when you mentioned the league before, you said the nobles agreed only to fight on certain specified days. I wonder which were their fighting days, and which were their quiet days.

Mrs. M. I believe I can tell you: the fighting days began at sunrise on Monday morning, and ended at sunset on Wednesday evening; after which all hostility was to cease till the sun rose again on the following Monday. It was also forbidden to fight, or make preparation for war, on any of the festivals of the church, and during Lent or Advent.

George. There was not then, after all, much time left for fighting.

Mrs. M. The regulations varied in different parts of France, according to circumstances; but the truce was, on the whole, highly beneficial to the country, and reflects great honour on the ecclesiastics and nobles by whose praiseworthy exertions it was made and enforced.

Mary. I am very glad to find there were some good priests in those days, and that they were not all bad.

Mrs. M. History is not the criterion by which we ought to judge of the character of the clergy: there are always amongst them, as amongst all other descriptions of men, some that disgrace their profession; and it is in general only the artful and ambitious who interfere in affairs of state, and who make their names conspicuous in history. The good and pious (by much, I trust, the most numerous), who confine their ambition to the fulfilment of their own proper duties, are overlooked, and their names are unknown to posterity; but their names are doubtless written in a record not perishable like earthly records.

Richard. It seemed very strange that the people of France should be so ignorant of geography as scarcely to know that there was such a country as Muscovy.

Mrs. M. The science of geography was very little studied till after the crusades. A canon of

Bremen, indeed, wrote a geographical work as early as the year 1010; and he tells us that Sweden and Norway were two vast realms unknown to the civilized world. Russia he describes as a country where the people had but one eye and one leg.

George. When you were speaking of those heretics who were burnt because they were of a pale complexion, I could not help thinking, mamma, what a bad chance you would have had, if you had lived in those days.

CHAPTER IX.

PHILIP I.

[Years after Christ, 1060—1108.]



Figures taken from monuments of the twelfth century.

THE late king appointed Bauldwin, earl of Flanders, to be guardian to his son Philip, who, at his accession, was only seven years old. Bauldwin died in 1067, and the young prince, being then fourteen, was declared old enough, according to the laws of France, to hold the reins of government without a guardian.

It is impossible to conjecture what Philip might have been, had he been brought up till manhood under the eye of a judicious parent or preceptor ; but, as the case was, he became a slave to his vices. He had naturally a good disposition and a comely person ; but all the faculties of his mind were absorbed and lost in sloth and sensuality, and his personal beauty was obliterated, almost in the prime of life, by the effects of excessive gluttony.

These vices, however, did not engross him all at once. In the early part of his reign he showed some degree of activity, by marching into Flanders to the assistance of Bauldwin, his late guardian's grandson, against his uncle Robert of Frizeland, who disputed with him the succession to the earldom of Flanders.

This Robert was, according to the notions of those times, a brave and politic prince, though we should esteem him worse than a common robber. Having been sent forth by his father with a band of adventurers to seek his fortunes, he attacked Holland, which was at that time in the possession of the widow of the last earl of Holland, who held it in trust for her young son ; and the countess found herself obliged to marry the invader as the only means of preserving herself and her children from ruin.

Philip was unable to contend with an experienced warrior like Robert, and was soon glad to make peace with him. One of the conditions of the peace was that he should marry Robert's step-

daughter, Bertha of Holland. He accordingly married her, but divorced her some years afterwards, on the plea of consanguinity. In 1093 he became enamoured of Bertrade de Montford, the wife of Fulk earl of Anjou, and persuaded her to leave her husband and marry him. The pope threatened to excommunicate Philip unless he sent Bertrade back to her husband, and on the king's refusal, put his threat in execution.

About the year 1094, the Turks, having driven the Saracens from Jerusalem, extended their conquests over the east. The emperor of Constantinople, Alexis Comnenes, began to tremble for his safety, and in an evil hour sent a letter to pope Urban II., imploring the assistance of the Christian states of the west. There were at this time two popes. A great quarrel had taken place between the emperor of Germany and the cardinals. Each party insisted on the right of choosing the pope; and Urban, in consequence of these dissensions, which were carried on with great bitterness, had come for protection to France. He called a council at Clermont in 1095, where he read the letter of the emperor of Constantinople, and exhorted all Christians to take up arms against the infidels. The minds of the people had been already roused by the representations of a monk of Picardy, well known by the name of Peter the Hermit, who was lately returned from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and who gave most pathetic descriptions of the

treatment which the Christians there experienced from the Turks. All France was in agitation, and, while the pope was yet speaking and promising indulgences and absolution to those who should take up arms in defence of the holy sepulchre, the surrounding crowd, as if seized with a simultaneous enthusiasm, shouted forth "*Dieu veult*"—God wills it. A crusade was immediately resolved upon, and the cry of "*Dieu veult*" became a sort of watch-word throughout Europe. A whole year was allowed for the necessary preparations, and the 15th of August, 1096, was the day appointed for the departure of the crusade.

The whole of France seemed now like a perturbed ocean. The barons were selling and pawning their lands to raise money for the expedition: the citizens were seizing the opportunity to purchase privileges and immunities, which the nobles, regardless of every thing but the present occasion, were now willing to sell to them. Even the very dregs of the people were inflamed with the universal zeal for crusading, and flocked in crowds to join the sacred banner. The leaders of the enterprise shrank from encumbering themselves with such an useless and disorderly mob. It was therefore agreed that these people should proceed to Palestine by themselves. Peter the Hermit and Walter the Pennyless (a Norman gentleman) undertook to be their leaders.

This tumultuous body, having little to prepare,

was in a hurry to depart, and would not wait for the rest of the armament. There appears to have been amongst them only a comparatively small number of soldiers. The rest of the multitude was a disorderly rabble, in which was a great number of women and children. They are supposed to have amounted in the whole to 300,000 persons ; but the accounts which have been handed down to us are so vague, and the computation of numbers at that time was so uncertain, that I do not find any two authors who coincide exactly as to the precise amount. It, however, seems very clear that they had no cavalry (it is said that there were only eight horses amongst them), and that they were in all other respects equally unprovided. Indeed, the greater part were ignorant what distance they had to go, and through what countries they would have to pass. It was enough for them to know that they were going to the Holy Land, and that their priests had assured them that this object, if attained, would secure the eternal salvation of their souls. They imagined that, in the mean time, God would feed them on the way, as he had fed the Israelites of old in the wilderness.

When they had passed beyond the confines of France and heard a strange language spoken, some of them supposed they had already arrived near the end of their journey ; and the poor children, with an eagerness natural to their age, would inquire at every town "if that was Jerusalem ?" Alas ! none

of them ever reached the promised land. Their conductors led them by way of Hungary and Bulgaria; but their knowledge of geography was very imperfect, and they often wandered about at random, sometimes following the track of an animal, or the flight of a bird, which they would fancy was expressly sent to guide them.

Finding themselves disappointed of the quails and manna they had expected, they were compelled to resort to force to obtain food, and consequently the inhabitants of the countries through which they passed rose against them. At one place we are told that the Danube was turned from its channel by the profusion of slaughtered bodies which were thrown into the river. Nearly the whole of this vast multitude fell a sacrifice to hunger, fatigue, or popular fury. A few who reached the opposite shores of the Bosphorus survived only to experience the greater misery of falling into the hands of the Turks. Peter and Walter, their ignorant and presumptuous leaders, alone lived to return, and we afterwards find them in the great armament which departed from France in the autumn of 1096.

This great armament amounted in the whole to the immense number of 300,000 fighting men, assembled from different nations, but chiefly from France. It was agreed that on account of the difficulty of procuring provisions for so vast a multitude, they should march in three divisions, each division taking a different route.

The first division was commanded by Godfrey of Bouillon, a warrior of high renown, who, if we may believe the concurrent testimony of historians and poets, was actuated to this undertaking solely by motives of piety. He was accompanied by his two brothers, Bauldwin and Eustace.

The king of France's brother, Hugh de Vermandois; Robert, son of William the Conqueror; Stephen de Blois (father of our king Stephen); Robert earl of Flanders, with many other princes, were in the second division; and being all of them too proud and too independent to submit to any leader, they each, though they agreed to keep together, marched under separate banners.

The third division was commanded by Raymond of Toulouse, a venerable knight, who was as much esteemed for wisdom as for valour. He was lord of one of the finest districts of France, and was one of her most powerful princes; but he quitted all from motives of religion, and resigning his territories to his son, abandoned his country with the determination never to return.

When this enormous host reached Constantinople, the emperor Alexis was overwhelmed with astonishment, and sincerely repented of having asked aid from Europe. The crusaders, presuming on the holiness of their cause, came more like masters than like friends and allies. They treated the emperor with insolence, looked on his people as barbarians, and considered themselves licensed

to commit every kind of violence and disorder. The emperor, on the other hand, as was very natural, viewed them with suspicion, and perhaps behaved to them deceitfully. At last they quitted Constantinople, and after a series of adventures, which it would be too long to relate, but during which they possessed themselves of the towns of Nice in Bithynia, and of Antioch, they arrived with a remnant of their army within sight of Jerusalem. They laid siege to the holy city, which they took. On July 15, 1099, the standard of the cross was planted on the walls.

Godfrey, their general, was elected king of Jerusalem, and the greater part of the crusaders returned home, leaving the new king begirt with dangers. On their arrival in France they were reproached by their countrymen with having abandoned their brave leader; and some of them, amongst whom was Hugh de Vermandois, resolved to return to Palestine and retrieve their reputation. Accordingly, in 1102, a new expedition was fitted out.

The command of this expedition was given to William of Poitiers, duke of Aquitaine, who, from the extent of his possessions and from his various talents, was one of the most considerable princes of his time. He was not only the friend and protector of poets and troubadours, but he was also a troubadour himself; and some of his poetry is still extant. His court was filled with minstrels and

jesters, and was more celebrated for its gaiety than for its decorum.

The fate of the army which William of Poitiers led into the East was even more unfortunate than that of the former one. It arrived in tolerable order at Constantinople; but there the pride of William drew on him the personal enmity of the emperor, who is accused, but with what truth I do not pretend to say, of revenging himself by giving him false guides. The crusading army was led into situations which exposed it to the attack of the Turks, and was defeated with a most horrible slaughter. William of Poitiers and some of the nobles saved their lives by flight: Hugh de Vermandois escaped to Tarsus, in Cilicia, but died soon after of his wounds.

While all these scenes were passing in Palestine, in France the king was sunk in sloth and sensuality, and appeared scarcely to know that a crusade was going on.

William duke of Normandy had conquered England in 1066, and died in 1087, leaving Normandy to his son Robert, and England to William Rufus. You probably recollect that Robert pawned his duchy to his brother, that he might be able to take the cross. William not only tried every means to keep possession of Normandy, but also endeavoured to extend its limits. He made several attacks on the French territories, but was bravely repulsed by Louis, the king's eldest son, who was at that

time quite a youth, and had only a small number of troops at his command. In 1100 William was killed in the New Forest, and the young prince of France was then left at leisure to turn his arms against enemies nearer home.

These enemies were the lords of Montlheri, of Montford, and other vassals of the crown, who, taking advantage of the indolence and incapacity of the king, had erected castles and towers, from whence they sallied forth like captains of banditti. Some of these towers were in the road between Paris and Orleans; so that it was not possible to travel from the one town to the other with safety. Louis chastised in some measure the insolence of these barons, and he gained so much popularity, that it drew upon him the increased hatred of Bertrade, who eagerly desired his death, since it would open the way of Philip, her own son, to the throne. She even gave Louis a slow poison, which would have been fatal but for the timely antidotes given him by a skilful physician. He always, however, felt the deleterious effects of this poison; his complexion was ever after of a death-like paleness. Louis himself does not entirely escape blame in these quarrels with his mother-in-law. He is even accused of having one day, in the heat of passion, attempted to stab her. Philip was greatly distressed by these contentions between his wife and his son, and at last succeeded in reconciling them. Louis, in his childhood, had been

totally neglected by his father, who had left him to follow in all things his own inclinations, which, as he was of a manly and active temper, naturally led him to delight in all the chivalrous exercises which at that time formed the chief occupations of the young nobility. The young prince thus acquired hardihood and skill in arms; he also imbibed that finer part of chivalry, an inflexible love of honour and integrity. To this he added a natural frankness of character that made him greatly beloved by the people. He was crowned when he was eighteen or twenty years old; and his father, apparently glad to be relieved from all care and trouble, resigned to him the entire government of the kingdom. Philip had frequently been excommunicated by the pope for having married Bertrade, whose first husband, Fulk of Anjou, was still alive. He contrived, however, to pacify the indignant pope, by making promises to repudiate her; but these promises he never performed. His slothful life was terminated in 1108, when he died, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and fiftieth of his reign. On his death he showed some consciousness of his own unworthiness; for he desired to be buried in the Abbey of St. Benoit on the Loire, and not in the Abbey of St. Denis, the usual burial-place of the French kings, being, as he said, too great a sinner to presume to lay his bones by those of the great martyr.

By his first wife, Bertha, of Holland, he had—

Louis, who succeeded him ;
Constance, married Boemond, prince of Antioch.

By Bertrade he had—

Philip,

Fleury,

Cecilia, married, first, Tancred, nephew to Boemond of Antioch; and, secondly, Alphonso of Tripoli, son of Raymond of Toulouse.

Philip was the first French king who altered the coin. In his time a species of money was circulated, which was nothing more than a piece of leather, in the centre of which was stuck a small silver nail.

The sovereignty of the crown of France did not at this time extend over more than a district of between thirty and forty square leagues, of which Paris was the capital city, and Orleans the next in importance. The monarchy had now reached its lowest state of debasement, and from this time it began to rise; and you will see it increase in power and dominion in every succeeding century.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER IX.

Richard. I should like to know how the rest of France was disposed of, since the king had so little of it.

Mrs. Markham. The country was at that time subject to such perpetual changes, that it is almost impossible to define the limits of every separate state; but, as nearly as their relative proportions can now be guessed at, France, in the eleventh century, was divided as follows.

The sovereignty of the king extended over a territory equal to about five of the present departments; the count of Vermandois in Picardy had two; the count of Boulogne, one; the earl of Flanders, four; the two families of Champagne and Blois, six; the duke of Burgundy, three; the duke of Bretagne, five; the count of Poitiers, seven; the count of Anjou, three; the duchy of Normandy, five; the duchies of Guienne and Aquitaine might be estimated at twenty-four. The emperor of Germany and the counts of Toulouse shared the sovereignty of Lorraine, part of Burgundy, and the ancient kingdom of Provence; and these were about equal to twenty-one departments. Thus we have accounted for the whole of the eighty-six departments into which modern France is divided. Of these, Anjou, Poitiers, Guienne, and Aquitaine, were at one time, as well as Normandy, possessed by the kings of England, and they together were equal to thirty-nine departments.

George. It seems to me, mamma, that those old kings of England were very clever fellows. At least they were a great deal cleverer than the kings of France.

Mrs. M. I do not, on the whole, greatly admire the characters of the Norman race of kings; however, I agree with you that they appear to great advantage compared to the Capetian kings. The Normans were a bold and enterprising people, and united in an eminent degree great activity of body with ardour of mind; and they were not only masters of England, and of a large part of France, but had also obtained a considerable settlement in Italy.

George. Pray, let us hear how they got it.

Mrs. M. About the year 1017, some Norman pilgrims to Rome were invited by Pope Benedict VIII. to attempt the conquest of a part of Apulia, which still remained under the yoke of the Greek empire. This enterprise they gladly undertook; and being at different times assisted by parties of their countrymen, they formed a settlement, which, after a century of combats, was the foundation of the Norman kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

Richard. What did they mean by Two Sicilies? Was the island then divided into two?

Mrs. M. The kingdom of Naples was at that time denominated one of the Sicilies; the island, of course, was the other. About the year 1053, the Normans in Apulia greatly increased their power by a victory which they gained over the pope, Leo IX., who had wished to drive them out of Italy. The Normans were at that time commanded by Robert Guiscard, or the Robber. He

was one of the twelve sons of Tancred de Hauteville, a descendant from Rollo, and seemed to have inherited much of the powerful mind of his great ancestor. He took the pope prisoner ; and though he treated him with the most profound personal respect, yet he would not release him till he had obtained from him the investiture of the dukedom of Apulia, which he had in part conquered, and also that of Calabria and Sicily, which he hoped to conquer. It does not appear that Leo had any right to bestow these territories ; but it sufficiently answered the purpose of Guiscard that he should assume it.

George. Then pray, mamma, whom did these territories really belong to ?

Mrs. M. Sicily belonged to the Saracens ; they having conquered it some time in the seventh century, and having remained its undisturbed masters till 1038, when the emperor of Constantinople made an attempt to get it from them. He did not, however, succeed, and Robert Guiscard and his brothers, after a ten years' struggle, got possession of it.

Mary. I think that Guiscard had not his name of Robber for nothing.

Mrs. M. As for Calabria, I can scarcely tell you whom it belonged to. The Saracens and the two emperors of the East and the West were all three contending for it ; at last the Normans subdued them all, and in 1080 Robert Guiscard was again

invested by the pope with the provinces of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, which he held as fiefs of the holy see. He died in 1085, having, a short time before his death, gained a great victory at sea over the Greeks.

Richard. He must have been a stout old fellow to go fighting on for so many years.

Mrs. M. He had a son named Boemond, who was what, I suppose, you would call another stout old fellow. He accompanied the first crusade under Godfrey of Bouillon, and when the city of Antioch was won from the Turks he was made prince of it. He was however so closely beset on all sides by both Turks and Greeks, that he had great difficulty in keeping possession of his principality. He ardently desired to return to Sicily to procure a supply of soldiers, but the difficulty was how to get there. At last he hit upon a most singular expedient to elude the vigilance of his enemies.

Mary. I suppose he put on some strange disguise.

Mrs. M. He dared not trust to any disguise. He caused it to be reported that he was dead, and having procured a coffin, bored with holes, which would enable him to breathe, he got into it, and ordered his attendants to request leave of the Turks and of the emperor of Constantinople to carry their dead master's body through their territories to be buried in Europe. Leave being given, he was

carried in this manner till he got to Corfu, where he believed himself beyond the reach of his enemies. He then got out of his coffin, and sent a message back to Alexis to say, that "the prince of Antioch was alive, and as much his enemy as ever."

George. And how did it end?

Mrs. M. It ended in his keeping his word with the emperor almost to the last. He returned from Italy with reinforcements, and kept up a constant hostility against Alexis, till a short time before his death in 1111, when, his army being in danger of starvation, he consented to an amicable treaty.

Richard. Was that the same emperor Alexis who gave William of Poitiers the false guides?

Mrs. M. It was. I think you never heard of a more shocking piece of treachery.

Mary. But if the crusaders behaved so ill to him, it could not be supposed that he would be very fond of them.

Mrs. M. There doubtless were very great faults on both sides. The conduct of the Latins (as the Europeans were called in the East) was in many instances very unpardonable. They treated the emperor and his people with undisguised contempt. A young Norman knight had one day the insolence to place himself on the imperial throne in the emperor's presence: he was however reprov'd by his superior officer, and made to descend. It is said that another of the Latins slew, out of sheer insolence, a tame lion which was a great favourite

with the emperor. When the crusaders crossed into Asia they chose to believe that all the inhabitants were Turks, and thus Christians and infidels alike suffered from their ferocity. After this you will not be surprised that they were considered and treated as enemies wherever they came.

Richard. I only wonder how any of them were allowed to get away alive.

Mrs. M. It appears that very few excepting the nobles escaped.

Mary. Had the Turks more compassion on them than on the others.

Mrs. M. I believe the reason was, that the nobles were always well mounted and well armed. The great mass of the soldiers were serfs, who were drawn from their peaceful homes to swell the train of their lords, who were all emulous to vie with one another in the number of their followers. These poor people marched on foot, and were slightly armed, having only a sword and a buckler. They had therefore neither means of defence nor of flight, and fell at the first onset with the enemy, like chaff before the wind.

Richard. Pray, mamma, is there not some very fine poem about the crusades?

Mrs. M. You mean, probably, the Jerusalem Delivered. It is an Italian poem written by Tasso, and is one of the most beautiful that is to be found in any language.

George. I think you once told us, mamma, that

the English first used crests and coats of arms in the crusades ; did the French also use them ?

Mrs. M. They were in use among all the crusaders, and it was the business of the heralds of the army to make themselves acquainted with the different bearings of the different chiefs.

Richard. And did the French continue to use them after they came home, as the English did ?

Mrs. M. Yes, just like the English ; and the custom was immediately adopted by all the nobles throughout France, as creating an additional barrier between themselves and the middle classes, who, from their increasing riches and consequence, were, to use a homely phrase, fast treading on the heels of the nobility.

George. That must have made those proud lords very angry.

Mrs. M. Many causes had combined to bring the upper and middle classes nearer together, the crusades especially, which had been so greatly conducive to enrich the commoners at the expense of the nobles. Many of those who had allowed their serfs to purchase their freedom were displeased when they returned home at finding how much they had diminished their own power by thus allowing them to become independent. The nobles, therefore, combined to increase their consequence by every artificial means in their power, and assumed family surnames, as well as family

coats of arms, as a farther distinction between them and the middle classes.

Richard. Could the merchants and those sort of people be made knights at the time you are speaking of?

Mrs. M. Certainly not, according to the laws of knighthood; nor could any one who was not of noble birth be admitted to enter the lists at a tournament.

George. Were there tournaments, then, in France, so long ago?

Mrs. M. The French claim the honour of introducing them. They are said to have been invented by a Geoffrey de Pruilly, about the middle of the eleventh century. But in all probability the tournament was only an improvement on the warlike games which the chivalrous customs of the times had introduced amongst the young men, who were accustomed to assemble in little parties from two or more neighbouring castles to make friendly trials of their skill. By degrees these trials at arms came to be attended with more and more pomp and ceremony, till at last they became almost affairs of state. Pruilly, however, seems to have the just credit of inventing, if not the tournament itself, at least the laws and ceremonies by which it was conducted.

George. And do you know what the laws were?

Mrs. M. They were so many and so minute, that I can only attempt to tell you a few of the

most important. The chief object of the competitors in these mock combats was to unhorse each other, and not to wound. It was therefore against the laws for a combatant to be fastened to his saddle, or to use any deadly weapons.

George. Then what weapons were they to use?

Mrs. M. Lances, staffs, and sometimes wooden swords. This law, I believe, was not very strictly kept, as we often read of the knights being wounded, and severely too, with sharp swords.

Richard. It always seems very surprising how the knights could fight, and gallop and wheel about, cased in all that armour.

Mrs. M. I am still more surprised at the horses, how they could move with all those trappings.*

These tournaments were so exactly suited to the temper of the French, that their fondness for them became almost a madness. Even the ladies used to be present at them, and entered with the greatest vivacity into the success of the several combatants. They would encourage their favourite knights by decking them with ribands and scarfs from their own dress, and during a long and anxious combat the poor ladies would appear at last almost stripped of their finery, which was seen tied to the armour of the combatants. In time the cost of these tournaments was carried to an inordinate excess; and there are many instances in which a French noble

* See the vignette at the head of Chapter VIII.

has been contented to end his days in distress, and to consign his children to poverty and obscurity, for the sake of giving a splendid tournament. Their dress and the equipment of themselves and their horses were enormously expensive. There were some who carried their folly so far, as to have the shields they used on these occasions set with jewels.

George. Well! I think that is the most foolish piece of vanity I ever heard of!

Mrs. M. I can tell you of another still more foolish. There came up about this time a fashion of wearing immense peaks to the shoes. It was invented by the earl of Anjou, Bertrade's first husband, to hide some strange deformity in his feet. The fashion was immediately adopted in France, and the Normans brought it over to England. An old French writer tells us, that they were worn two feet in length, and shaped like the tails of scorpions; and that in a battle between the Greeks and some Norman knights, the latter were invincible as long as they remained upon their horses: but when dismounted they became a certain prey to their enemies, being rendered perfectly helpless by the length of their shoes, which hindered them from walking except with the perpetual danger of falling down at every step.

CHAPTER X.

LOUIS VI. SURNAMED LE GROS.

[Years after Christ 1108—1137.]



Ladies in the dress of the fifteenth century.

LOUIS, who had been associated in the crown at the age of eighteen or twenty, was about thirty years old when his father died. He had no taste for learning, nor any political talents; but he had, what was far better, a good heart, an inflexible love of justice, a friendly disposition, and a gay and cheerful temper. It might, however, be said

of him, that his love of justice was on some occasions too inflexible, and led him to punish offenders with excessive rigour, and to oppose violence with violence.

He was naturally brave and exceedingly active, nor did he allow his corpulence, which was such as to acquire him the surname of *le Gros*, or the Fat, to render him indolent. He never relaxed in his vigilance, nor in his endeavours to protect the weaker part of his subjects from the oppressions of the rich; he was almost continually engaged in petty wars against his nobles, and while he was with his army, he lived with his soldiers more like their comrade than their king, partaking of the same hardships, and exposing himself to the same dangers.

I have already said, that the great lords in the neighbourhood of Paris, taking advantage of the supineness of the late king, had many of them sought to repair their lessened fortunes by turning robbers. Their castles were filled with armed men, who were continually on the watch for travellers, whom they attacked and robbed, and sometimes murdered. If a rich merchant was so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of these marauders, he was imprisoned in the castle dungeon, and tortured till he would agree to pay such ransom as the lord of the castle chose to demand.

Louis had endeavoured during his father's lifetime to repress these practices, and as soon as he

was established on the throne he set himself diligently to punish the offenders. He found it, however, a very difficult task ; for no sooner was one subdued than another rose up in his place. He had hoped to win over one of the most powerful of these depredators, by causing his own brother Philip to marry his daughter and heiress. But Philip joined with his father-in-law, and thus the king had two enemies where he before had one.

It would be a tedious history to give you the detail of the different nobles with whom Louis had to contend. It will be enough to say, that Hugh de Cressy and the lords of Montford and Montlheri were those who gave him most trouble, and were the most dreaded by the people for their cruelty and extortions. We may still see near Paris the ruins of the tower of Montlheri, where its lord used to be on the look-out for the merchants coming from Orleans, and from whence he would pounce upon them as a lion on his prey.

In a few years Louis found himself called upon to attack a more distant enemy. Henry I. of England, having unjustly seized on Normandy, kept his unfortunate brother Robert in perpetual imprisonment, and obliged his son William to fly for safety and protection to the king of France. Louis readily granted the protection he sought, and in 1119, being joined by many nobles who were alarmed by the increasing power of Henry, (who had built the castle of Gisors to overawe the fron-

tier,) he marched with a considerable army into Normandy. A battle was fought between the two monarchs at Brenneville, which terminated to the advantage of the English. The loss was not great on either side. Owing to the eagerness of each party to take their enemies alive, for the sake of their ransoms, only three knights were slain. A peace was afterwards effected between the two kings by the good offices of pope Calixtus II., who was at that time in France, having fled from the disturbances in Italy, occasioned by the contest, which was still as violent as ever, between the emperor Henry V. and the cardinals.

In 1124 the war again broke out between Louis and the king of England, who called upon the emperor of Germany, who had married his daughter Matilda, to assist him. The emperor was glad to be revenged on Louis for the protection he had given to Calixtus, and set about preparing for the invasion of France.

Louis had no means within his own small territory of repelling so powerful a foe; he therefore unfurled the *oriflamme*, a banner which was kept with great veneration in the Abbey of St. Denis, the titular saint of France, and which was to be brought forth only on the most important emergencies.

The unfurling of the *oriflamme* called on all the fiefs of France, from one end of the country to the

other, to assemble round their king, and to follow him to the war.

The summons was promptly obeyed, and Louis found himself, almost as it were instantaneously, at the head of 200,000 fighting men. The intended invasion, however, never took place, the emperor dying in 1125. A short time before his death he had made peace with Calixtus, who returned to Rome, and tranquillity was for a time restored to Italy.

In the year 1127, Louis bestowed on William, the young prince of Normandy, the earldom of Flanders, to which indeed he had a claim in right of his grandmother Matilda, the wife of the Conqueror. But William had a very short enjoyment of his earldom. He died in consequence of a neglected wound, while yet in the flower of his age.

In 1131 Louis had the misfortune to lose his eldest son, a very promising youth, who had been crowned about two years before. The manner of this prince's death exposes to us the neglected and filthy state in which the streets of Paris were then suffered to be kept. The streets were very narrow, and full of dirt and rubbish, and pigs were allowed to range about in them. One of these pigs ran against the horse which the young prince was riding, and caused him to fall; and the rider was so severely hurt as only to survive a few hours.

On this occasion an order was issued declaring that no pigs should be in future suffered in the streets. The monks of the Abbey of St. Antony remonstrated against this order, and an especial permission was given to their pigs to run in the streets, provided they had bells about their necks.

The death of his eldest son caused such inexpressible grief to Louis, that he was for a time too much overpowered by it to be able to attend to public affairs.

In 1132 he crowned his next son, Louis, who was then only twelve years old. Antiquaries conjecture that it was upon this occasion that the peers of France were reduced in number, and limited to twelve.

The king, as he advanced in life, found the inconvenience of his excessive corpulence to increase, and that his constitution was fast breaking down. In 1134 he was seized with an alarming illness, and believing his end approaching, he was anxious to be reconciled to his enemies and to die in peace with all the world. Contrary to his expectation he recovered, and lived three years afterwards; but his resolutions survived the first alarm of his illness, and he passed these last three years in tranquillity.

The death of Henry of England, in 1136, delivered him from his most formidable enemy; and Stephen, who seized on England and Normandy, was too much occupied in defending himself against

Matilda and her husband Geoffrey, to have time to turn his attention towards France.

Geoffrey Plantagenet was so much disliked by the Normans, who knew his violent and unfeeling temper, that they gladly acknowledged Stephen as their duke. William the Tenth, duke of Aquitaine, took the part of Geoffrey, and joined him in making an invasion of Normandy; but the dreadful excesses committed by these invaders only confirmed the Normans in their detestation of Geoffrey, who was obliged to retire into Anjou. Upon Geoffrey's death, however, in 1151, the Normans acknowledged his son Henry as their duke.

In the meantime the recollection of the cruelties which he had committed in the invasion of Normandy dwelt on the mind of the duke of Aquitaine. The best measure he could devise to relieve the burden of his troubled conscience, was to go on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostella, in Spain. He set about arranging all his affairs before he went, and believed that he had provided for the security both of his family and his dominions, by offering Eleanor, his eldest daughter and heiress, in marriage to Louis, the eldest son of the king of France. William proceeded on his pilgrimage, and died in the church of Compostella during the performance of divine service.

The marriage of Louis of France and Eleanor of Aquitaine and Guienne was celebrated at Bourdeaux with all suitable pomp; but as the youthful

couple were on their way to Paris, they were met at Poitiers by messengers who brought them the news of the king's death.

Louis le Gros died August 1, 1137, and never was a king of France more sincerely lamented, more particularly by the poorer classes of his subjects, whose friend and protector he had always been. He died in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and the thirtieth of his reign.

When young, his father had made him marry a sister of the cruel Hugh de Cressy; but he divorced her as soon as he was his own master. In 1115 he married Adelaide of Savoy, by whom he had six sons and one daughter:—

Philip, who died in consequence of a fall from his horse.

Louis, succeeded his father.

Robert, count of Dreux.

Peter, married the heiress of the Courtenays.

Henry, } ecclesiastics.
Philip, }

Constance, married, first, Eustace, count of Bologne; secondly, Raymond V. count of Toulouse.

Louis, during his wars with the barons, found that the strength of his government lay amongst the merchants and townspeople, and he therefore united his interests with theirs against the nobles, and granted the towns many valuable charters and immunities, which tended to deliver the citizens

from the excessive tyranny of their immediate feudal superiors. One of the clauses in these charters fully proves how much the citizens stood in need of protection. It was this:—That all criminals should, if found guilty, be punished according to the established law of the land, and not according to the will or caprice of their lord.

The citizens were glad to avail themselves of the good inclination of the king towards them, to procure charters for forming themselves into *communes*, which was another word for associations for mutual defence. It was the practice of these communes to elect from amongst themselves a chief magistrate, whose business it was to watch over the safety of the rest, who were all to assist him in time of danger.

The formation of these communes was strenuously opposed by the nobles, whose despotic sway they greatly abridged; and they were one chief cause that lengthened out the wars between them and the king.

Some writers give Louis more merit than he probably deserved in regard to the charters which he granted to the towns, and say that they proceeded from his love of freedom and justice; but the probability is, that he was induced to grant them for the sake of weakening the power of the nobility, and also for the sake of the money which the citizens were willing to give him for their enfranchise-

ment; and it is singular that he would not allow *communes* to his own good towns of Paris and Orleans.

Whatever were the king's motives, the effect was eminently beneficial. The people began to feel themselves no longer at the mercy of capricious and often cruel masters. Arts, sciences, and commerce flourished; waste lands were brought into cultivation; the chains of slavery were broken. In another century freedom spread from the towns into the country districts, and the peasants were no longer bought and sold with the trees that grew on the soil. In the course of time the cities became so rich and powerful that it was judged proper to admit deputies from the communes into the general assemblies of the nation, which till then could only be attended by nobles and prelates; but these great changes did not take place till the fourteenth century, and I shall have to speak of them again in their proper place.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER X.

George. I am afraid it is a foolish kind of curiosity, but I cannot help puzzling myself with thinking what sort of tortures those wicked barons inflicted on their rich prisoners.

Mrs. Markham. It is not a species of knowledge that will give you either pleasure or instruction. However, that you may not *puzzle* yourself any longer I will describe to you one of their common modes of torture. The unfortunate wretch was laid on his back on the ground, and heavy weights were heaped upon him till he agreed to pay the ransom that was demanded.

Richard. But suppose he would not agree, what was done then?

Mrs. M. Then more weights were heaped upon him till he died.

Mary. Oh, mamma, how horrible! I do not wonder the king wanted to rid the country of such cruel people.

Richard. Indeed I think that it was now high time to place the people under the protection of the law, and to deliver them from the caprice and tyranny of the nobles.

Mrs. M. Amongst the many great changes which about this time took place in the condition of society, there was none more remarkable than the increasing taste for learning which was to be observed, more or less, among all ranks of people; at least among all who were raised above poverty.

Richard. Was Louis an encourager of learning?

Mrs. M. He had no taste for learning himself. He had been left, rather through carelessness than indulgence, to follow, when a child, his own in-

clinations, which led him, as I have already said, to chivalrous sports rather than to study. The chief cause that encouraged learning in this reign was, that the sale of benefices being considerably if not totally checked, the road to church preferment become effectually opened to all who were eminent for learning or virtue. Low birth, which was an exclusion from other dignities, was no bar to advancement in the church. This gave a great stimulus to the middle classes. The schools were filled with students, and it was extraordinary to see what a striking effect this love of study had upon the manners of the inhabitants of the towns, who became infinitely more civilized than formerly.

George. That was just as it ought to be; because you know, mamma, papa was telling us this very day that the word *civilization* is borrowed from *citizen*.

Richard. Were there any very great men amongst the scholars of this time?

Mrs. M. I believe I may name two who were very eminent; one was the Abbé Suger, and the other was Abelard. Suger is spoken of as being one of the wisest and most virtuous ministers that ever governed France under any of her kings. He was of obscure birth and of an unprepossessing appearance, but had made use of no unworthy arts to procure his advancement. He was abbé of St. Denis and chief counsellor to Louis le Gros, and afterwards to his son Louis VII. He was a man

of uncommon learning, and possessed, what is perhaps still more rare, an excellent judgment in the affairs of life. Abelard, the other great genius of this age, was a teacher of rhetoric, philosophy, and theology. So numerous was the concourse of scholars who flocked to hear him, that he was obliged to deliver his lectures in the open air, no hall in Paris being found capacious enough to contain his audience.

Richard. Did the nobles flock to hear these lectures, or were the students chiefly of the middle classes?

Mrs. M. I do not suppose that Abelard had many nobles amongst his scholars. The nobility appear to have left the more serious studies to the inferior classes, and to have devoted themselves almost exclusively to poetry and romances. An acquaintance with the writings of the troubadours and trouveres was now becoming a necessary part of the education of gentlemen and of ladies.

Mary. Pray, mamma, who were the *troubadours* and the *trouveres*?

Mrs. M. They were poets and romance writers. The earliest troubadours were natives of Provence, who, instead of writing in Latin, composed songs in their native dialect. They were in general persons of no education, but had the happy art of fascinating their hearers by the harmony and simplicity of their verses. From this time the Provençal, or language of Provence, became the lan-

guage of poetry, and, for the space of two or three centuries, was universally studied and admired. At length it ceased all of a sudden to be cultivated, and it is now almost forgotten, at least as a written language, although it may still be traced in the provincial dialects which are spoken in the south of France. One of the singularities of the poetry of the troubadours, and what made it, I suppose, so captivating to every ear, was, that it was written in rhyme, which they were the first to introduce into France, and which they are supposed to have learnt from the Arabians.

Mary. It is very odd that they could not find out rhyme for themselves; it seems to me the most natural thing in the world.

Richard. Is there any of the poetry of the troubadours now existing?

Mrs. M. There are, I understand, immense numbers of Provençal manuscripts preserved in the royal library at Paris, but the language is now so obsolete that they are unintelligible to most readers. I have met with translations of some of the songs of the troubadours, which appeared to me very flat and tedious, being chiefly compliments to the beauty or complaints of the cruelty of the ladies whom they pretended to admire. The troubadours were the greatest of all flatterers, and that probably made their poetry so delightful to those for whom it was written. They led wandering

lives, and roved about at their pleasure, and were welcomed wherever they went.

Mary. And pray, mamma, who were the *trou-veres* ?

Mrs. M. They were the poets of the north of France. Their songs were written in the French Wallon language, which, as I have before remarked, is the original language from which modern French is derived. The troubadours wrote only poetry ; but the *trouveres* were not only poets, but also wrote prose romances ; the name of *trouveres* being intended to distinguish them from the writers and compilers of true histories and chronicles. The first French romances were written by Normans.

Mary. Was nobody allowed to make verses or stories except the regular troubadours and *trouveres* ?

Mrs. M. Any body who could *might* be a troubadour, and when the Provençal poetry became so much admired, many persons wrote verses for their amusement who were not poets by profession. William of Poitiers, of whom I have spoken to you as the leader of the second warlike expedition to the Holy Land, was a very famous troubadour in his day. A taste for poetry was at one time carried to such an excess amongst the higher orders, that every lady who was eminent for rank or beauty had her poet. And while the gentlemen had their

tournaments and trials at arms, the ladies had what they called their courts of love and their trial of wits. At these meetings all poets were challenged to appear and to recite their verses; judges were appointed to decide on the merits of the competitors; and prizes were given to the successful poet with infinite parade and pomp. In these courts, a lady of the highest rank always presided, and they formed what might be called the dissipation of fashionable life in that period, and were the resort of all the frivolous characters of both sexes. In time they assumed a still greater solemnity, and became petty courts of justice for the settling of difficult cases of precedency, and of nice points in etiquette, and sometimes for the trial of graceless lovers. The discussions at these assemblies were so trivial and ridiculous, and their sentences awarded with so much parade and pomposity, that we are now puzzled to determine whether they were meant as a jest, or whether they were held in real seriousness.

Richard. What you said about young William of Normandy brought to my recollection your history of king Henry I. in your history of England; and I cannot help thinking, that the death of his own son, who, you know, was drowned, must have been a judgment upon him for his cruelty to his nephew.

Mrs. M. The ways of God are so inscrutable to man, that it is presumptuous in us, blind and erring mortals, to say how his judgments fall. What

appear like adversities may, if they bring us nearer to God, be in reality blessings: while prosperity may be more frequently sent us as a trial of our virtue than as a mark of favour. It is remarkable, however, that a particular circumstance occurred to induce the king to send his son in a different ship from the one which he himself embarked in; and we may, I think, justly acknowledge in it the express hand of God, who was about to take the prince, while young and innocent, from the evil to come, and to leave the king a little space for repentance.

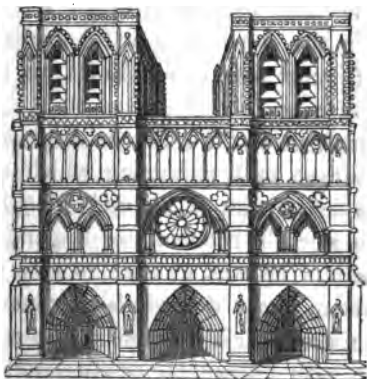
Mary. I don't remember, mamma, the circumstance to which you allude.

Mrs. M. It is not named in the account I formerly gave you of the young prince's death: I only met with it in a history of France a few days since. When Henry was on the point of embarking for England; a man of Barfleur came to him to claim the privilege of conveying him in his ship. This privilege he said he claimed in virtue of a promise of William the Conqueror to his father (in whose vessel he embarked when he made the conquest of England,) that the right of conveying the future kings of England across the sea should be hereditary in his family. The man further pleaded that he had fitted out a gallant vessel, which he called the *white ship*, for this express occasion. Henry, unwilling to disappoint so zealous a servant, consented that the prince and his retinue should embark on board his vessel. They did so, and you know what followed.

CHAPTER XI.

LOUIS VII. SURNAMED LE JEUNE.

[Years after Christ, 1137—1180.]



Front of the church of Notre Dame in Paris.

LOUIS, at his accession, was eighteen years old. He possessed from nature many amiable qualities, amongst which was a tenderness of feeling, very unlike that hardness and brutality of character which was prevalent in the times he lived in. He was very devout, but unhappily his piety showed itself chiefly in superstitious observances, and not in that religion of the heart by which the moral conduct is regulated. His talents were very mo-

derate, and had received little improvement from education; he was, however, notwithstanding his many errors and weaknesses, greatly beloved by his subjects, and a contemporary writer thus speaks of him: "He was a man of fervent devotion towards God, and of an extreme gentleness to his subjects; full of veneration for the clergy, but more simple than became a king: and confiding too much in the counsels of artful and dishonest men, he left more than one stain on his otherwise praiseworthy name."

In the early part of his life he displayed a degree of courage and animation which served to conceal the deficiencies of his understanding; but in after-life, when by the death of Suger and other wise counsellors he was obliged to rely upon his own judgment, those deficiencies became but too apparent; more especially when he was called into competition with Henry II. of England, who was the most politic and long-sighted monarch at that time in Europe.

In the early part of the young king's reign, he chiefly occupied himself in chivalrous amusements, leaving the affairs of the nation to be conducted by Suger.

In 1141 Louis became entangled in a dispute with pope Innocent II. concerning the right of investiture to the benefices in France, which Innocent assumed to himself. Louis also drew on himself another enemy in Thibaud, earl of Cham-

pagne. Thibaud's sister had been married to the count of Vermandois, and Louis made the count, who was his own cousin, divorce her, and marry Petronilla, the sister of queen Eleanor, to prevent her dower from falling into the hands of any one who would interfere with the interests of France. Thibaud immediately commenced hostilities against the king and the count of Vermandois.

Louis marched into Champagne, and took the castle of Vitry, which he afterwards set on fire, meaning only to destroy the fortress; but the flames raging more fiercely than he had expected, spread to the town, and burnt down a church, into which a great number of the inhabitants had fled for refuge. The king, who was near enough to hear the shrieks of the dying wretches, and to see their half-consumed bodies, was struck with so much remorse and horror at this shocking scene, that he gave up the war, and made peace with Thibaud.

Normandy was at this time the scene of a destructive war between the house of Anjou and Stephen of England. The south of France was also distracted by the contending claims of the descendants of the female branches of some of the great families which had become extinct in the male line. On a sudden all private quarrels were suspended, and all domestic concerns forgot. Accounts were received from Palestine that the Turks had taken Edessa, a town situate to the north of

the Euphrates, and held under the new kingdom of Jerusalem, and had massacred all the Christians whom they found there. This intelligence spread universal consternation. A new crusade was immediately determined on, and was advocated with great earnestness by the king, assisted by St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, a man revered for his wisdom and sanctity, and whom the people were so much accustomed to consult on all occasions, that he might be called the oracle of France. Though sinking under the weight of years and infirmities, he appeared at a meeting held at Vezelay, and urged the people with so much effect to take the cross, that the cry of "the cross! the cross!" resounded on all sides. Crosses were to be fastened on the sleeves of those who engaged to join the crusade. These Louis and the abbot undertook to distribute; and the ardour for the crusade was so great, that they were obliged at last to cut up their cloaks to supply the demands of the immense number of people who flocked about them asking for crosses.

Eleanor, as well as Louis, took the cross, and all were to be in readiness to depart for Palestine in the spring of the year 1145.

St. Bernard having roused France, next traversed Germany, and at last prevailed on the emperor, Conrad III., though somewhat reluctant, to take the cross.

The wise Segur did all in his power to prevent

Louis from engaging in this mad and destructive undertaking ; but seeing that his endeavours were of no use, he made a virtue of necessity, and lent his aid in forwarding the expedition. A meeting was held at Estampes early in 1145, for the purpose of arranging the plan of the route. All the experienced warriors were desirous to go by sea, as being the most expeditious and the least hazardous course ; but the king being young and vainglorious, thought lightly of the dangers by land, and would not listen to their sage counsel. His nobles also, who hoped to maintain their troops by plunder on their march, opposed the passage by sea, and it was accordingly settled that they should follow the usual route, through Germany and Hungary to Constantinople.

The feast of Pentecost was the day fixed for the departure of the army, and Louis employed the intermediate time in preparing himself for his holy work by exercises of devotion. On the eve of the day appointed, he repaired to St. Denis. The oriflamme was presented to him with great solemnity by the abbot ; and Louis, to show that he intended to visit the Holy Land more as a pilgrim than as a soldier, put on a pilgrim's scrip, which had been sent him by the pope. The remainder of the day he spent in monkish observances, and he passed the night in one of the cells of the Abbey. The next day he and the queen departed for Metz, which was the place of rendezvous.

Conrad and his Germans, who were already set out, met with a series of continued disasters, chiefly occasioned by their own misconduct. The French, taking warning by their misfortunes, observed better discipline during the march, and arrived in tolerable order at Constantinople, where the emperor Manuel, grandson of Alexis Comnenus, though very far from being rejoiced at their coming, yet received them with tolerable courtesy.

After a short rest, the French army proceeded to Nice on its way to Antioch. To Antioch there were two roads. One, which was about twelve days' journey, lay across the mountains, and through the midst of the enemy's country; the other road was much more circuitous, but more secure, and led along the sea-shore. Conrad had chosen the short but more hazardous way, and the first news Louis heard on his arrival at Nice was that the Germans had been totally cut to pieces by the Turks. Only the emperor and his nephew, Frederic Barbarossa, with a few followers, escaped the general slaughter by the fleetness of their horses.

This dreadful catastrophe determined Louis to pursue the safer road by the coast. The way was tedious, and at last, being weary of following all its sinuosities, he resolved, when he reached the river Menander, to brave all the dangers of the inland country, and to take a short cut from thence to Satalia. On this new route he had not advanced far, when he saw the Turks drawn up in order of

battle on the other side of a ford which the army was just about to cross. The gallant crusaders plunged into the water, amidst a shower of arrows, and attacked the enemy at the very water's edge, and soon put them to flight. Their elation at this victory did not last long, for as they proceeded their difficulties increased ; the country became more mountainous, and they were perpetually harassed by the flying troops of the enemy. Beyond Laodicea they entered on narrow defiles, and were obliged to march in two separate bodies. One day the van had been ordered to halt in a commanding situation till the rear, in which was the king, should come up ; but the leader, seeing a pleasant valley, disobeyed his orders, and descended into it. By this ill-judged movement, the two divisions of the Christian army were shut out from each other ; and the Turks, who from the heights above watched all their motions, took advantage of it to attack the rear, and made a dreadful slaughter. The king escaped with the greatest difficulty, and with the loss of all his provisions and baggage.

The relics of this great army were now in a miserable condition, in an unknown country, without provisions and without guides, for wherever they appeared the people fled, and they found only deserted villages.

In this terrible dilemma the soldiery, seeing the ignorance and incapacity of their leaders, determined, as the only means of preservation, to give

the command, without any consideration of rank, to the best man they could find. Their choice fell on a poor knight, who is only known to us by the name of Gilbert. This Gilbert justified the high opinion they had formed of him. He conducted them safely during twelve days through many dangers, by intricate ways, and over rivers, in the face of the enemy, whom he attacked and defeated. When he had brought the army in safety to Satalia, he considered his task as finished, and resigning his command, resumed his private station.

Satalia is a small seaport about three days' sail from Antioch. The journey by land is much longer. When Louis arrived here, he found only vessels enough to convey himself and his nobles, and he felt reluctant to abandon his poor soldiers to encounter difficulties which he did not share with them. He was, however, persuaded to embark, taking with him almost all his nobles, and all the horses he had left. The count of Flanders remained to conduct the army by land, and 500 Greek horsemen were procured to be their guides. These forsook them at the first sight of the Turks, and the French returned once more to Satalia, whence the count of Flanders, having obtained a vessel, sailed after the king. The soldiers were left a prey to fatigue, hunger, and the swords of the Turks, and all perished miserably, excepting 3000, who, to preserve their lives, renounced their religion and became Mahomedans.

Louis in the mean time arrived safely at Antioch, but his stay there was rendered very uncomfortable by his disagreements with the queen, which were fomented by the artifices of the count of Antioch, who was her uncle.

The count endeavoured to prevail on Louis to undertake some enterprise against the Turks; but Louis resisted all his entreaties, and more bent on accomplishing his pilgrimage than on making conquests, went to perform his devotions at the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem. His vow being fulfilled, he had now nothing to detain him, but he lingered one year in Palestine, as if reluctant to show himself in France a defeated and a dishonoured man. At last the pressing instances of Segur, who informed him that his brother was fomenting disturbances in France, induced him to return.

Louis reached France in October, 1149, and found himself bitterly reproached by his subjects as the destroyer of the flower of the French chivalry. This grievous reflection on him, and his own self-accusation, preyed on his mind, and totally altered his temper. His cheerfulness forsook him; and because he was displeased with himself, he also became displeased with and morose to others. He had lost the ardour of inexperienced youth, and that presumptuous courage, which he and his flatterers had mistaken for real valour. All his misfortunes, however, failed to teach him discretion.

During the remainder of his reign, the precipitancy of his temper often made him rush unprepared into war; and the same cause often drove him into an impolitic and unstable peace.

The disagreement which had for some time subsisted between him and his queen was another cause that soured his temper. At last, in 1153, he obtained a divorce, and at the same time resigned all the vast dower he had received with her, although he might reasonably have retained a part, as the portions of the two daughters he had by her.

Eleanor very soon afterwards married young Henry Plantagenet, who, by the death of his father, was possessed of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou. To these dominions he now, by his marriage with Eleanor, added Guienne and Aquitain; and not long afterwards, by the death of king Stephen, he obtained the crown of England.

Louis soon discovered that Henry was his superior in sense and talents, as well as in power, and hated him with all his heart. The records of the next twenty years contain little else than the history of the wars between these two rival monarchs. During one of the short intervals of peace that occurred, the kings of France and England went to Torcy-sur-Loire to receive Pope Alexander III., who fled to France for refuge from the troubles which again distracted Italy; and each taking a reign of his horse's bridle, they conducted

him, with the utmost respect and submission, to the lodgings which had been prepared for his reception.

Soon after Louis had divorced Eleanor, he married Constance of Castile. She died in 1160, leaving one daughter. He married, a third time, Alice, sister to the earl of Champagne; and in 1169 he had a son, Philip, whom he surnamed *Dieu-donné*, or the Gift of God, but who is better known by the name of Philip Augustus.

Louis was glad of every occasion to show his enmity to Henry, and took part against him in his disputes with Thomas-à-Becket; and when Henry's sons were grown up, he excited them to rebel against their father. Henry, the eldest, married Margaret, Louis's daughter by Constance. This prince was naturally of a proud and overbearing temper, and was encouraged in his misconduct by his father-in-law.

In 1173, Henry's three sons, Henry, Geoffrey, and Richard*, declared open war against him, and were joined by Louis, who entered Normandy with a strong force. He laid siege to Verneuil, and after a month's siege the garrison agreed to surrender, if in three days no succour should arrive. Two days passed, and Louis thought himself sure of his prize, when news was brought him,

* Geoffrey had married Constance, the heiress of Bretagne, and was duke of Bretagne. Richard had been made duke of Aquitaine by his father.

that Henry was approaching to the relief of the garrison. Louis sent heralds to Henry with pretended negotiations for peace, in hopes to delay his march. The artifices in part succeeded; and the third day passing over without the expected succour, the men of Verneuil surrendered their town. Louis, perfidious in every thing, carried away the principal citizens in chains, contrary to the articles of capitulation: and, setting fire to the town, broke up his camp and hastened towards the frontiers of his own territories, in hopes to arrive there before Henry should overtake him; but he was disappointed. Henry saw, from a distance, the rising flames and smoke of the burning town, and pursued the retreating foe with so much activity that he soon came up with him, and obliged him to turn his retreat into an ignominious flight.

In the following year, 1175, Louis met with another instance of the ill success that commonly attends perfidy. He was besieging Rouen with a numerous army: the town was well garrisoned and provisioned: and the siege, which had already lasted some months, seemed likely to continue a long time. On the tenth of August, which is St. Laurence's day, Louis, to do honour to that saint, proclaimed a suspension of arms, which was joyfully accepted by the people of Rouen; more particularly by the younger part of the inhabitants, who, tired of having been so long cooped up within the walls, went to enjoy themselves by the banks

of the river, where they amused themselves with a kind of a tournament.

The count of Flanders—the same, I believe, who had deserted the poor soldiers at Satalia, and who had, on many other occasions, been the king's bad adviser—seeing that the citizens were wrapt in perfect security, proposed to Louis to take advantage of the confidence which they placed in his good faith, and to seize the opportunity of surprising the town. Louis at first rejected with scorn this wicked counsel, but at last he yielded to the temptation, and gave orders for the assault. It happened that a priest of Rouen, who had not been disposed to take any part in the general merriment, went, by way of something to do, to the top of the high tower in which hung the alarm bell, and from thence he amused himself with looking down into the enemy's camp. All at once he perceived a prodigious bustle of men in arms hurrying from tent to tent, some of them carrying scaling-ladders. He instantly suspected some attempt was intended against the town, and, without losing a moment, began to ring the alarm-bell. The citizens, on hearing it, left their tournament, and hastened into the town. The gates were shut, the walls manned, and every thing was soon in preparation to receive the enemy, who, when they arrived, instead of entering a defenceless city, found themselves vigorously repulsed and driven back. The next day, Henry arrived with a numerous

army of Brabançons. The gates were now thrown open, and the garrison, no longer obliged to act on the defensive, rushed out to attack Louis in his camp. He did not wait for them, but fled with the utmost precipitation. He and Henry made peace with each other soon afterwards.

Louis, in 1179, was desirous of seeing his son Philip crowned, who was now in his fifteenth year. The ceremony was to have been performed with great pomp, in the presence of all the great vassals of France, who were already assembled on the occasion; but on the day before that on which the ceremony was to have taken place, the young prince, when hunting, got separated from his companions, and was lost in a forest. Here he wandered about all night, and was found in the morning by a man who came to cut wood in the forest, and who conducted him back to his terrified attendants. In consequence of the fatigue and cold he had undergone, Philip fell dangerously ill, and the king, who was deeply afflicted by the illness of this his only and long-desired son, made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Thomas-à-Becket at Canterbury, in the hope that his old friend, who was now canonized as a saint, would work a miracle for him, and restore his son to health. Louis was so very anxious to return, that he was absent only five days, and the fatigue and anxiety of his journey occasioned an attack of palsy immediately on his return home.

The young prince recovered, and his coronation took place with extraordinary splendour; but the king was too ill to be present at it. He languished many months in a painful state between life and death. The queen and her brothers, the earls of Champagne and of Blois, were desirous of taking the reins of government in their own hands; but the prince, even at that early age, displayed a proud and domineering spirit: he withdrew himself from the control of his mother and his uncles, and sought the alliance of the count of Flanders, whose niece, Isabella of Hainault, he married, contrary to the wishes of his mother. Philip behaved in other respects so ill to his mother, that the king of England sought an interview with him, and entreated him not to sully his name by undutifulness to her.

The count of Flanders was Philip's chief adviser, till the death of Louis put an end to his influence. Philip, as soon as he became his own master, cast off his control, as he had already done that of his own relations.

When Louis was on his death-bed, he caused his money, clothes, and jewels to be brought to him, and distributed them with his own hands amongst the poor. He died September 18th, 1180, in the sixtieth year of his age, and the forty-third of his reign. He had been married three times: first, to Eleanor of Guienne, by whom he had two daughters:

Mary, married the earl of Champagne ;

Alice, married the earl of Blois.

By his second wife, Constance of Castile, he had one daughter :

Margaret, married, first, prince Henry of England, and, secondly, the king of Hungary.

By Alice of Champagne he had one son and two daughters :

Philip, who succeeded him ;

Agnes, married Alexis, son of the Greek emperor ;

Alice, betrothed to Richard of England, married the count of Ponthieu.

During this reign the number of communes was increased, and freedom continued to advance by gradual steps.

There were now many heretics, or at least persons so called ; and of these the Albigenes seem to have been the most considerable.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XL

Richard. Pray, mamma, why were those people called Albigenes ?

Mrs. Markham. From a city in Languedoc called Alby, where they first appeared.

Richard. And what difference was there between them and other heretics?

Mrs. M. Their opponents accused them of entertaining many very strange and absurd doctrines; but I believe they were greatly wronged, and that in the main they differed but little from the Lollards of our own country. In the next chapter you will hear that the pope published a crusade against the Albigenses, and that for many years the hitherto peaceful districts of the south of France became the scene of one of the most cruel and exterminating wars that ever disgraced the annals of any country. The arbitrary tribunal of the Inquisition was first instituted during this crusade against the Albigenses.

Mary. It was very bad, I think, to have crusades against Turks and those people; but it was a great deal worse to have crusades against Christians.

Mrs. M. The religious spirit of those times was very intolerant, and it was thought more pleasing in the sight of God to persecute a heretic or a Jew, than to perform any act of benevolence to a fellow-creature.

George. And did these crusaders against the Albigenses wear crosses like the real crusaders?

Mrs. M. They made this distinction: that the real crusaders wore their cross upon the left shoulder, and that these wore it on the breast. In their ferociousness, and in their mistaken zeal, they were just alike. It was not only a meritorious act in

their eyes to slaughter Turks, Jews, and heretics, but it was thought sinful to show them any compassion. With regard to the Jews, Saint Bernard is almost the only man who in those days had courage to advocate their cause. We may hope that his exhortations were not totally thrown away, for a custom was about this time abolished at Beziers, which had long prevailed there, of celebrating Palm Sunday by a general attack on the Jews, or rather, I should say, on the Jews' houses, since it was not permitted to attack their persons.

Mary. And what did they do to their houses?

Mrs. M. They threw stones at them, and they threw them in such quantities, and with such hearty good-will, that sometimes they would knock the houses down; and when they did, it was always a matter of great rejoicing to the zealous citizens of Beziers.

Richard. But I don't see how a house could be knocked down in that way without the people in it being hurt or killed.

Mrs. M. If it happened that a Jew lost his life on these occasions, it added considerably to the satisfaction of the assailants, who did not regard it as any infringement of the law, but as a lucky accident.

Richard. Pray, mamma, what made the oriflamme so famous?

Mrs. M. The oriflamme was a banner which belonged to the abbey of St. Denis, and the monks

pretended that it had been brought there by an angel from heaven in the time of Clovis. The kings of the house of Capet, who were originally counts of Paris, and held a fief of the abbé of St. Denis, claimed the right of carrying this banner; and at last Louis le Gros adopted it instead of the banner of St. Martin, which had till then been the royal banner of France.

Mary. And did the monks pretend that St. Martin's banner had also come from heaven?

Mrs. M. They did not assign it so high an origin, although they regarded it with great veneration as a precious relic. It was made of a piece of Saint Martin's old blue cloak. The oriflamme was made of red silk, and covered with golden flames. It was used till the time of Louis XI., after which it disappeared, and is no more mentioned in history.

George. I think, mamma, that Paris must have been a very nasty, dirty place, when that young prince was killed by the pig that ran under his horse.

Mrs. M. Paris was, in the time of Louis VI. and his son, the worst-built and dirtiest city in France.

Richard. I suppose that by that time it had outgrown the little old island in the Seine.

Mrs. M. The walled part of the city was still confined to the little old island, but the opposite shores of the river were thickly studded with buildings, which were all connected with the town.

Many of these were religious houses; and the monks, to preserve themselves from the depredations of the neighbouring barons, had been obliged to enclose their premises with strong walls. These enclosures were called *closes*, and each bore the name of its own monastery. The spots where these closes were are now covered with streets, but the names are sufficiently preserved to enable the Parisian antiquary to trace their respective sites.

Richard. I think you said that Louis VI. would not allow Paris and Orleans to have a commune. Was that because those towns were so well off they did not require one?

Mrs. M. I am afraid Louis had not so good a motive. The fact was, he did not choose to make his own people too independent. Paris stood in greater need of the protection of a commune than almost any other town in France, for it was subject to the oppression of three separate masters.

Richard. How was that, mamma? I should have thought that Paris had no other master but the king.

Mrs. M. He, as count of Paris, was lord of only the western half of the city; the eastern part belonged to the archbishop; and, besides these two, the *prevôt*, who was a kind of governor or sheriff, had a sort of power over the whole city, and the poor citizens were terribly off amongst them all. Whenever the king came to Paris, his sergeants had a right to

ransack every house, and take whatever they chose for the use of the royal family. Louis VII., although, like his father, he would not agree to their having the privilege of communes, yet granted the Parisians several rights and immunities.

Richard. I think the people of Italy were always in a tumult. How often the popes were obliged to come and take refuge in France !

Mrs. M. The schism between the cardinals and the emperors lasted for a very long time. They each insisted on the right to elect the pope ; and the consequence was that there were frequently two popes, who were of course bitter antagonists, each insisting on his own right, and calling the other *antipope*. About this time the two parties began to be distinguished by the names of the Guelphs and the Ghibelins.

Mary. They were very odd names.

Mrs. M. The first, which I believe is German for wolf, was the war-cry of the duke of Bavaria, who fought on the side of the cardinals. Ghibelin was the war-cry of the emperor Frederic Barbarossa, and was derived from the name of a village in Franconia, from which his family originally came.

George. And which got the better ?

Mrs. M. At this time the Guelphs got the better. Alexander was acknowledged as the true pope, and he made the emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, who was a most proud and violent-tempered

man, ask his pardon, and prostrate himself on the ground while he set his foot on his neck.

George. I would have resigned my empire, if I had been Frederic, before I would have submitted to be trampled on in that manner.

Mrs. M. Humiliations of that kind were not at all uncommon. Several instances are recorded of nobles who were obliged to make their submissions to their offended superiors, by coming into their presence on their hands and knees, and with a saddle on their backs.

Mary. How very strange many of the old customs were!

Mrs. M. And no customs, you will think, were stranger than some mere amusements. At a royal marriage at the court of Navarre, the princes and princesses were entertained by a spectacle which would now be thought too disgusting to please even a mob at a fair. This was a combat between two blind men and a pig. The men were armed with clubs, and the pig was to be the prize of whichever could knock it on the head. The pig, having the use of its eyes, could generally avoid the blows which were aimed at it, and the blind men, instead of striking the pig, generally hit one another; and in this, it seems, the chief diversion of the sport consisted, to the by-standers at least. If this story illustrates the manners of a court, I can tell you another which gives us a little insight into the manners of a monastery.

When pope Alexander was in France, he went to pay his devotions in the church of St. Geneviève, at Paris. A splendid carpet was prepared for him to kneel on. When the pope had finished his devotions and left the church, his attendants and the monks of St. Geneviève quarrelled for the possession of this carpet; they fell to blows, and the uproar became so great that the king came in person to quell it. But his presence was no restraint on the combatants, who continued their battle with such indiscriminate rage, that even the king himself got his share of the blows, and was obliged to retreat.

Richard. And what became of the carpet?

Mrs. M. The monks gained the victory, and carried it off in triumph. But their triumph was short; for when the pope saw how they had mauled his people, he immediately ordered them to be turned out of their monastery.

Mary. Do you know, mamma, what sort of a thing the scrip was, which the pope sent Louis before he went to the Holy Land?

Mrs. M. It was a leathern bag, fastened by a belt round the waist, and was meant to contain necessaries for the journey. The scrip was an essential part of a pilgrim's outfit. The rich wore it for show, and the pope for use.

Mary. Did the pope provide scrips for all the pilgrims?

Mrs. M. I do not find that he bestowed any

but on royal pilgrims. The rest received theirs, together with a staff, from the pastor of their own parish; and when they returned home, each pilgrim was expected to place a branch of palm over the altar of his parish church, in token that he had performed his vow.

George. I think it very natural that men should like to go crusades and pilgrimages; but the women had better have stayed at home.

Mrs. M. Indeed I think so; but it appears that the ladies of the twelfth century were not of the same opinion. In the emperor Conrad's army were several German women, who acted the part of soldiers. They wore armour, and fought valiantly with swords and spears. Even children were not exempted from the madness of the crusades. Towards the end of the twelfth century a crusade was undertaken in France, called the Child's Crusade, which was entirely conducted by boys.

George. And how did it end? Did they conquer any Turks?

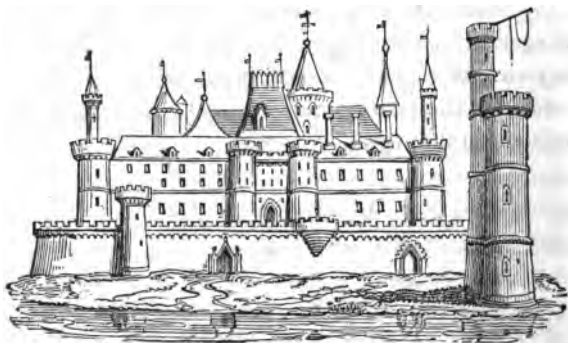
Mrs. M. It ended, as might have been expected, very ill: and as for conquering Turks, they did not even arrive at the sight of any. This absurd expedition was begun by a boy (I do not know in what part of France), who was so fanatical as to believe that he had received a commission from God to redeem the holy sepulchre, which, he asserted, could only be redeemed by the innocent hands of children. The populace, who in all countries are

easily caught by any thing new, flocked to the young enthusiast ; and many parents permitted their sons to enlist under his banner. He traversed the country in a richly ornamented car, followed by his train of young crusaders, and wherever he came, he and his companions were received with a kind of religious respect. At last they reached the coasts of the Mediterranean, and believing that they would be carried to the desired port by divine guidance, they embarked, as it should seem, in ill-appointed vessels, for the history ends by saying that they all perished in the waves.

CHAPTER XII.

PHILIP II., SURNAMED AUGUSTUS.

[Years after Christ, 1180—1223.]



The Louvre in 1360.

THE reign of this king forms one of the most remarkable eras in the history of the French monarchy. Till this time the French nation was a sort of confederation of princes, governed by a feudal chief; but Philip soon made himself an absolute monarch. He had early shown an impatience of control, and a determination to rule alone; and it is said of him, that, without being a great man, he yet performed many great actions. In fact, he was endowed with no fine qualities or extraordinary

talents ; he was crafty and ambitious, and his success was chiefly owing to the cunning with which he laid his plans, and his steady perseverance in executing them. His was not the ambition of a hero aspiring after glory, but the long-sighted, calculating spirit of a man eager for gain. But although artful and perfidious in his dealings with rival princes, it is but right to say that he treated his subjects with some show of justice and consideration ; a very rare virtue in those days.

Philip was the first king of France who could be styled a politician. He had great confidence in his own powers, and was impatient for an opportunity of trying his strength against the wise and politic king of England. Many causes of dispute soon arose between them. Henry refused to restore the dower of Margaret, his eldest son's widow, which Philip, as her brother, had a right to expect. Henry delayed the marriage of his son Richard with Alice, Philip's youngest sister ; and when his son Geoffrey died in 1186, he assumed a right to govern Bretagne in the name of Arthur, Geoffrey's posthumous child. Many conferences were held between the two monarchs on the subject of these differences. Philip was anxious for war ; but Henry, whose interest it was to preserve peace, always found means to avoid it. These conferences were commonly held under an elm-tree near Gisors, which grew so exactly on the confines of France and Normandy, that the two kings could

meet beneath its branches, each standing on his own territory. At last Philip, in a passion at finding that Henry was neither to be intimidated nor cajoled, cut down the elm, declaring that they should never meet again under its shade.

Philip, finding he could not succeed in bending Henry to his wishes, tried his artifices on his sons, and he found no difficulty in prevailing on them to rebel against their father. He and prince Richard (now the king of England's eldest surviving son), the more to vex Henry, made a great parade of their friendship. They would live in the same tent, would sleep in the same bed, and drink out of the same cup; but this their great friendship was soon, as you will hear, turned into the most deadly hatred.

On the death of Henry, in 1189, Richard succeeded to the throne of England, and he and Philip agreed to go together on a crusade. They were to go by sea, and would take no pilgrims with them, but only soldiers; so that this was the most effective host which had yet been sent out of Europe. But unluckily the two kings determined to spend the winter at Messina, and this part of the plan proved fatal to the expedition. Their ill-cemented friendship had time to cool, and the winter was passed in mutual heart-burnings.

When spring came, Philip hastened to Acre, which had been taken from the Christians by Saladin the Great, the sultan of Egypt, and which

the Christians were now endeavouring, with all their collected forces, to win back. Richard did not arrive till the month of June, having been detained first by his marriage with Berengaria of Navarre, and, lastly, by the conquest of Cyprus.

The mutual animosity of Philip and Richard, which had begun in Sicily, was strengthened at Acre. The English and French, instead of pressing the siege, thought only of skirmishing before the walls, to exhibit to each other their horsemanship and dexterity. But at length the news of Saladin's approach united them in the common cause, and they exerted themselves with so much vigour that the town was taken.

Richard, on this occasion, obtained so much praise for his valour, that Philip's jealous heart could not brook it; and, on the plea of ill-health, he departed for Europe, having first taken a solemn oath that he would make no attack on the territories of Richard during his absence. He left behind him ten thousand men, under the command of the duke of Burgundy. But these men were a hindrance rather than an assistance to Richard, for the duke of Burgundy had received orders from Philip to thwart the English king on all occasions.

In the mean time Philip arrived in Italy, and went to pay his devotions at Rome, where he endeavoured to prevail with pope Celestin III. to absolve him of his oaths to Richard. But Celestin would not sanction such perfidiousness.

Philip reached France in 1192, and had there the additional mortification of finding that Richard was enthusiastically admired throughout Europe, and regarded as the champion of christendom. In the following year, however, he had the satisfaction, such as it was, of hearing that his rival was taken prisoner in Germany, on his return from Palestine, and confined in one of the emperor's castles. Philip now lost no time in attacking Normandy, and in stirring up John, Richard's brother, to seize on England. But in neither of these attempts did he succeed. Both English and Normans were faithful to their king, whose faults they forgot in admiration of his courage, and in natural pity for his misfortunes. At last Richard obtained his freedom, and I think you know that as soon as the news of this event was carried to France, Philip sent off a scroll to John, in which he told him, "*de prendre garde à soi : car le diable étoit déchainé.*"

From the time of Richard's release from captivity till his death, in 1199, an almost perpetual war was produced by the bitter hatred of the two kings to each other. In a battle near Vendome, in 1194, Philip was defeated with the loss of all his money and camp equipage, and all the records belonging to the crown. This disaster determined Philip to erect a building at Paris, in which the royal archives should in future be deposited.

Philip's first wife, Isabella of Hainault, died in

1191, and in 1193 he married Ingeberge, a princess of Denmark, to whom he took so great a dislike that he shut her up in a convent, and obtaining a divorce, married Maria, daughter of the duke of Dalmatia. The pope, Innocent III., took the part of Ingeberge, and laid the kingdom under an interdict, which lasted three years. At the end of that time Philip found himself obliged to submit. He divorced Maria, and brought Ingeberge on a pillion behind him from the convent where she resided to the pope's legate; then having made this public show of reconciliation, he sent her back to her convent. But in the latter part of his life, Maria being dead, Philip sent for Ingeberge to court, and lived with her to all appearance very happily.

Richard of England died in 1199, and his brother John seized on his dominions, to the exclusion of his elder brother's son, Arthur of Bretagne.

In 1200, Philip and John made a treaty, by which Philip obtained possession of Issoudun, Gracay, and some other places, as the dower of Blanch of Castile, who was John's niece, on her marriage with Louis, Philip's eldest son.

Young Arthur of Bretagne claimed the assistance of Philip against the usurpations of his uncle, and Philip sometimes took up his cause and sometimes abandoned it, as he thought best suited his own interests. At last this unfortunate prince fell into the hands of his cruel uncle, who put him to

death ; but as you are already well acquainted with the melancholy particulars both of his fate, and that of his unfortunate sister, the damsel of Bretagne, I need not here repeat them.

Arthur's mother, Constance, had been married again to Guy de Tours, a gentleman of Poitou. By him she had one child, Alice, whom, on the death of Arthur, the Bretons chose to be their sovereign. Guy de Tours was appointed regent. and took on himself the title of duke of Bretagne.

In the mean time Philip, as suzerain, had cited John to appear at Paris to answer for the murder of Arthur. John did not obey this summons ; he was in consequence pronounced guilty of murder and felony, and all the lands he held in fief were declared forfeited. Philip, who had long set his heart on Normandy, lost no time in enforcing this sentence. He laid siege to Château Gaillard, the bulwark of Normandy, which he took March 6, 1204, after a siege of many months. The rest of Normandy proved an easy conquest. John now seemed to be stupified, and instead of taking any active measures for the preservation of his territories, abandoned himself to frivolous amusements ; and the Normans could not fight with any vigour under so despicable a sovereign.

John was the last of eleven dukes who had governed Normandy during a period of 293 years. Jersey and Guernsey, and some other smaller

islands, are the only relics of that ancient dukedom which remain in the possession of the crown of England.

Philip soon became master also of Maine, Touraine, and Anjou; and in 1213 he found himself encouraged by the English, who were completely disgusted with John, to attempt the conquest of England. Pope Innocent III. sanctioned the enterprise, and Philip assembled an army and a fleet on the coasts of Picardy, and was on the point of hoisting sail, when he received a message from cardinal Pandolf, the pope's legate in England, to say that John had submitted himself to the holy see, and was now under the protection of the pope; and that consequently the king of France must resign his intended invasion. This peremptory command enraged Philip extremely, but nevertheless he did not choose to disobey it. He therefore vented his rage on the earl of Flanders, who had previously incurred his displeasure by refusing to lend his aid to the intended invasion of England, which he regarded as an unjustifiable breach of the law of nations. Philip marched into Flanders, burning and destroying every thing that came in his way. He was soon, however, recalled, by hearing that the English ships had sailed from their ports and destroyed his fleet; and the only fruit of this cruel attack on Flanders was a rancorous hatred between the Flemings and the French, that long subsisted.

The count of Flanders was now Philip's declared enemy, and joined with the emperor Otho IV., and with the king of England, in a confederacy against him.

On Aug. 27, 1214, Philip met his enemies with an army of 50,000 men, at Bouvines near Tournay. The confederate army, which was commanded by the emperor, was still more numerous; but the superior skill and vigilance of Philip gained him a decided victory. William of Bretagne, who was Philip's chaplain, was present at this battle, of which he has given us a circumstantial account; and I think you will not dislike to hear some passages from it. The French army had passed the bridge of Bouvines, and Otho thought this a favourable moment for commencing the attack. "When Philip was informed that the emperor was in movement, he, fatigued by the length of the way and the weight of his armour, was resting under the shade of an ash-tree, which grew near the church. At this news he rose up and went into the church, and addressing a short prayer to God, he went out, took up his arms, and with a joyous face, as if he had been going to a wedding, remounted his horse. In crossing the field we heard the cry, 'to arms! to arms!' the trumpets resounded, and the squadrons which had already passed the bridge returned. We called for the banner of St. Denis but as it was not at hand we would not wait for it. The enemy seeing, to their surprise, that the king

had faced them, turned to a higher ground on the right; they had their backs to the north, and the sun, which that day shone brighter than usual, was in their faces. The combat was hot and impetuous. The German cavalry being warlike and very audacious, pushed close to the king. His attendants defended him; but they with their Teutonic fury would have only the king. In the mean time the German infantry came up, and with their little lances and their hooks dragged the king from his horse, and he would have been killed, had not divine Providence preserved him. His standard-bearer waved the banner in token of distress, which brought some knights to the rescue, and the king, though wounded, sprang on his feet and remounted his horse. The emperor also encountered equal danger, for a French knight, Pierre Mauvoisin, seized his horse by the bridle, whilst another attempted to stab the emperor in the throat; but he, as is the manner of knights in our days, was clad in such thick armour, that it could not be penetrated. The Frenchman aimed another stroke, which the emperor's horse in rearing received in his eye. The animal, mad with pain, turned short round, and bearing his master a few paces off, dropped down dead. The emperor mounted another horse, and having thus shown us his back, he left us for a trophy of our victory his imperial eagle, and the car on which it was mounted. The king said to his people, 'We shall see his face no

more this day;’ and in fact he would no longer oppose himself to the valour of our knights.”

The bishop of Beauvais was one of the combatants, and fought with a mace, which was deemed a more suitable weapon for a priest than a sword or lance.

Philip took many prisoners in this important battle, and amongst them the counts of Flanders and of Boulogne. The former was confined in the tower of the Louvre, which was at that time without the walls of Paris. The count of Boulogne had a large log of wood fastened by a chain about his waist, and was shut up in the tower of Piron. This victory was celebrated at Paris with transports of joy by a people who have at all periods of their history made glory their idol.

Whilst these things were passing in the north of France, the southern provinces were desolated by a war against the Albigenses, which began about the year 1209, and was carried on with a most disgraceful ferocity.

Amongst the most conspicuous of the sufferers in this war were Raymond, count of Toulouse, and his nephew, the viscount of Béziers. Amongst the most savage of their persecutors was Simon de Montford, who in 1215 had the sovereignty conferred on him of all the country conquered from the Albigenses. De Montford was killed at the siege of Toulouse in 1218. After his death the war subsided for a time, though it was often re-

newed at different periods. The sect though persecuted was never extinguished, and many of the French Protestants, who are still numerous in the southern provinces, are descendants of these Albigenes, whose memory and whose sufferings are still held in veneration.

In 1216, prince Louis was invited by some English barons to claim the throne of England, in right of Blanch his wife. Philip not choosing to get into any dispute with the pope, who still declared John to be under his protection, affected to be displeased with his son for acceding to the wishes of the English nobles. He nevertheless furnished him with a sufficient army for the enterprise, and Louis landed in England in the month of June, and was received with great appearance of cordiality by the inhabitants of London. But the death of John in the following October totally changed the aspect of affairs. The barons, now that the object of their dislike and dread could no longer alarm them, repented that they had invited into their country a foreigner, and the son of their enemy. Deserting Louis, they swore allegiance to the young Henry, their late king's son. As a last effort, Louis sent his army into the north, but on May 19, 1217, it was defeated in a bloody battle at Lincoln. After that he gave up the enterprise, and returned to France.

The last event of importance in the reign of Philip was the setting out of another crusade.

This armament was particularly directed against the sultan of Egypt. It attacked and took Damietta. In the town were found immense riches; but these the crusaders had little time to enjoy. Part of the army was destroyed by the plague, which raged in Damietta; and a part, having set forth to besiege Cairo, was prevented by an inundation of the Nile from either advancing or being able to retreat. In this extremity they were glad to accept the conditions offered them by the sultan, of giving up Damietta, and returning to Europe. Thus ended what is called the fifth crusade.

In 1223 Philip, finding his health decline, set about arranging his worldly affairs; and feeling some remorse at the manner in which he had amassed his treasures, he appropriated a part of them to the express purpose of repaying, after his death, those persons whose money he had unjustly taken in his lifetime.

He died July 25, 1223, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and the forty-fourth of his reign. By his first wife, Isabella of Hainault, he had only one child,

Louis, who succeeded him.

By Maria of Dalmatia he had a son and a daughter,

Philip, count of Boulogne.

Maria, married first the count of Namur, and secondly the duke of Brabant.

By Ingeberge, who survived him, he had no children.

In the early part of his reign, Philip banished the Jews from his dominions, and enriched his coffers with their spoil. He afterwards enriched himself again at their expense, by allowing them to purchase permissions to return.

He was the first king of France who maintained a standing army. All the former kings had nothing to depend on except the uncertain assistance of their vassals. Also, under the plea of protecting himself from assassination, Philip was constantly attended by a troop of young men, who were called *Ribauds*. They were armed with maces, and guarded him night and day. The captain of this band had the title of king of the ribauds, and no one was suffered to enter the palace but those he thought fit. After a time he was also made executioner.

During this reign the leprosy spread to an alarming degree, and lazar houses were built in every town for the reception of persons afflicted with that loathsome and infectious disorder.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XII.

Mary. Pray, mamma, why were these houses called lazar houses?

Mrs. Markham. They were so named from

Lazarus, of whom we read in our Saviour's parable. The leprosy is supposed to have been brought from the east into Europe by the crusaders.

Richard. I think all the crusades were first begun by the French.

Mrs. M. The spirit of crusading seemed peculiarly adapted to suit the temper of that restless people. The French exulted in considering themselves as the very soul of the crusades. The four principalities of the Christians in the east, Jerusalem, Antioch, Tripoli, and Edessa, were all founded and governed by Frenchmen.

George. I hope, mamma, there is no harm in saying, that I like Saladin, although he was a Mussulman, better than all the crusaders put together.

Mrs. M. There is no harm in extolling merit wherever we find it. Saladin's was in reality very fine character. He had been brought up in all the effeminate customs of the east, and in his youth was devoted to luxury and pleasure; but no sooner did he become animated by ambition and a love of glory, than he cast off his former habits of self-indulgence, and showed himself a pattern of simplicity and abstemiousness. The Latins would have done well to have followed the example he set them of clemency, and of moderation in victory; an example that forms a mortifying contrast to their own brutal and ferocious cruelty. To his own people Saladin was liberal and generous. He

expended none of the great riches he acquired by his conquests upon himself, but bestowed the whole in works of public utility, and in acts of munificence to individuals; and when he died, one solitary piece of gold, and about forty pieces of silver, was all that was found in his treasury.

Richard. How did the Christians get on in Palestine after Richard Cœur de Lion left them?

Mrs. M. Their loss in Richard was in some measure counterbalanced by the death of Saladin, who died in 1193; and thus they became freed from their most powerful adversary. The Turks, also, after the loss of their sultan, were so incessantly occupied by quarrels amongst themselves, that they had little time for molesting the Christians.

Mary. I suppose, then, that the Latins, as I think you said they were called, could now enjoy peace and quietness.

Mrs. M. They were a people to whom peace and quietness was no enjoyment, and no sooner did they obtain a respite from the Turks than they turned their arms against the Greeks. Constantinople was at that time rent in factions. Isaac Comnenus, the emperor, had been deposed by his brother Alexis, who, according to a shocking custom in the east, put out his eyes. The poor blind Isaac had also a son called Alexis, who vowed vengeance against his uncle, and the city was in a state of the greatest uproar. In the midst of these

distracting scenes, the Latins appeared before the city with a large fleet of galleys, which had been sent by the Venetian republic. The entrance to the port was protected by a very strong chain, which reached across the harbour; but this chain was severed by an enormous pair of shears, with which one of the galleys was armed, and the whole fleet entered the harbour. The tumult in the town was so great, and the contending parties so entirely occupied with each other, that there was but one person (Theodore Lascaris) who made any attempt to defend the city from the common enemy. But he, soon perceiving that his attempts were useless, abandoned the city, leaving the French and Venetians absolute masters of it.

The Latins elected Baldwin, earl of Flanders, to be emperor of Constantinople. He reigned about three years, at the end of which time he fell into the hands of the Bulgarians, who it is supposed put him to a cruel death; but his fate was never precisely ascertained.

George. Then I suppose there was an end of this Latin empire of Constantinople.

Mrs. M. It lasted yet a little while longer. Baldwin had only two daughters, the eldest of whom inherited Flanders. Constantinople was bestowed on his brother Henry, a brave and good man, who defended and governed his little empire (which did not, after all, extend beyond the walls of the city) with great spirit and wisdom. He

died in 1216. Peter de Courtenai was appointed to succeed him, but was taken prisoner on his road to Constantinople, and never enjoyed his imperial dignity. Peter's son, Robert, was chosen in his place, and the throne remained in the family of the Courtenais till the year 1261, at which time Baldwin II. grandson of Peter, was reduced to the greatest distress, surrounded on all sides by powerful enemies, and without any resources or means of defence. In this extremity he came to Europe, to solicit aid. He brought some jewels and relics with him, which he pawned to the Venetians; but at last his distress became so great, that he even pawned to them his own son, for money to defray his travelling expenses.

George. I don't think there is a beggar in the country who would do such a thing as that!

Mrs. M. This imperial beggar was reduced to many strange necessities, and spent the remainder of his life in wandering over France and England, soliciting charity, while the Greeks, under Michael Palæologus, once more established themselves in Constantinople.

Richard. Pray, mamma, who was that earl of Flanders who was taken prisoner at the battle of Bouvines?

Mrs. M. He was a brother of the king of Portugal, and became earl of Flanders in consequence of his marriage with Jane, the first Baldwin's eldest daughter and heiress. Jane was a

very wicked, hard-hearted woman, and suffered her husband to remain a prisoner many years, because she refused to pay his ransom.

Mary. What a set of people they were in these times, pawning their sons, and refusing to pay their husbands' ransoms !

Mrs. M. The Flemings were as indignant as you can be, Mary, at Jane's conduct, and they were very glad when they thought they had found an opportunity of depriving her of her power. The story is a singular one, and I will tell it you at length. In 1224, above twenty years after the time when Baldwin, Jane's father, had been supposed to have been put to death by the Bulgarians, a man made his appearance in Flanders, who asserted himself to be the emperor. The account he gave of himself, and of his escape from captivity, had so great an air of probability, that the Flemings, by whom Baldwin had been as much beloved as his daughter was disliked, lent a willing ear to his story. All who remembered the late earl saw, or fancied they saw, in this man, a striking resemblance to him, allowing for the changes which time and suffering would necessarily occasion in his appearance. The countess, finding the people ready to assert his claims, fled to Paris, and put herself under the protection of the king. Louis VIII. (in whose reign this took place) prevailed on the supposed earl to come to Peronne, where he and the pope's legate appeared as judges to decide the

cause between him and the countess ; she having declared the man to be an impostor, of the name of Bernard de Rays, who bore a singular resemblance to her father.

The man made very pertinent replies to the interrogatories put to him, excepting to the three last ; but as he was unable to answer these, the king pronounced him an impostor. Louis having promised him a safe conduct through his dominions, he was suffered to depart unmolested. Jane, however, soon contrived to get him into her hands, and had him put to death on a scaffold, after having first inflicted upon him many needless tortures.

George. What were the three questions that he could not answer ?

Mrs. M. They were the following :

In what place he had done fealty to king Philip ?

Where and by whom he had been knighted ?

And the place and the day on which he had married his countess, Maria of Champagne.

Richard. Ah, mamma ! I fear he was an impostor ; the real earl would certainly have been able to answer such questions as these.

Mrs. M. There were nevertheless many persons who still continued to believe in his identity, and who said, in his excuse, that Louis was so very desirous to have him. proved an impostor, that, on the first appearance of hesitation in his answers,

he did not give him time to recollect himself; and that the proceedings were hurried over in such a manner as effectually to prevent him, even if he really was the earl, from clearing up any difficulties. However that might be, great doubt still remains on this affair. The Flemings were at the time fully persuaded of the reality of the story the man told, and regarded Jane in abhorrence as the murderer of her father. To put a stop to these accusations, the countess sent persons into Bulgaria to ascertain the circumstances of her father's death, and to bring proofs of it that would satisfy the populace. They returned in due time, and the populace were satisfied.

Richard. Why, what proofs did they bring?

Mrs. M. They said that they had not only found the earl's grave, but that a miraculous light emanated from it; and there was no disputing evidence like that.

George. These Flemings would believe any thing!

Richard. I should now like to talk a little about king Philip Augustus. Do you know, mamma, that of all the kings we have yet come to, I dislike him the most?

Mrs. M. He is, however, a great favourite with the French, because he raised the dignity of the crown, and because he did more than any other king had done before for the embellishment and improvement of Paris.

George. I am sure, mamma, from what you told us yesterday, it was not before it was wanted.

Mrs. M. His first great improvement was to pave the streets, and the circumstance which led to his making this improvement is thus quaintly told by an old historian. "The king, one day walking about in his royal palace, went to the window to divert his thoughts by watching the course of the river. Waggon's drawn by horses were traversing the city, and by throwing up the mud, made such an intolerable stench that the king could not endure it. He at that moment conceived a difficult but necessary project—a project which none of his predecessors had dared to execute, because of its extreme difficulty and expense; and this was the paving of the streets." The two principal streets (and perhaps others), were, in consequence, paved with large flat stones. The accumulation of soil has since been so great, that this original pavement, which is still to be found, is seven or eight feet below the present surface. The next great work which this king undertook was to enclose the buildings, *closes*, gardens, and other cultivated lands that bordered the two banks of the Seine, with a strong wall flanked with round towers. This was a great undertaking, and was between twenty and thirty years in completing; but when finished, Paris, though still small, compared with the present city, was nearly four times its original size. The palace of the Louvre, which

now stands in the heart of Paris, was built by Philip as a country residence on the outside of the new wall. It was a heavy gloomy building, and, according to the fashion of the times, it was intended both for a palace and a prison.

Philip built, on the site of the old cathedral of Notre Dame, a new church, in that style of architecture which had been brought from the East by the crusaders. He also enclosed the park at Vincennes on the outskirts of Paris; and our king Henry II. supplied him with deer to stock it with. Amongst other things, Philip built a bazaar for the convenience of the merchants, who were thus enabled, as the old historians tell us, to expose their goods for sale without the hazard of their being stolen by "les gentilhommes." But the most important benefit which Philip conferred on Paris was an aqueduct which he caused to be constructed for the purpose of supplying the city with water.

George. I must own the Parisians at least are justified in their admiration of Philip.

Mrs. M. It is singular that amongst all these improvements the king did not add that of another bridge. There was at this time no communication between the newly-enclosed parts of Paris on both sides of the the river, except through the island, by means of the two old bridges of the Great and the Little Chatelet.

Mary. How many bridges are there now ?

Mrs. M. There are sixteen, if we include a foot-bridge, and a wooden one in the old part of the town.

Richard. How did learning thrive in this reign?

Mrs. M. It kept gradually gaining ground. Philip gave it every encouragement, and built several schools; but his own particular studies could hardly come under the title of learning. He was passionately fond of romances, and it is to his taste for that kind of reading that we owe all the marvellous histories of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and of Charlemagne, and his Paladins, which, with many other of the old romances, were written in this reign. It is diverting to see how exactly Arthur, Charlemagne, Alexander the Great, and all the rest of the heroes in these romances, are made to speak and act like knights of the thirteenth century; and this reminds me, that the measure of verse which is used by the French in their serious poetry, and is commonly called by them the Alexandrine measure, has its name from a romance of the history of Alexander, which was written in that measure by a French poet of the time of Philip Augustus.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOUIS VIII., SURNAMED THE LION.

[Years after Christ, 1223—1226.]



Thibaud, count of Champagne.

LOUIS was in his thirty-sixth year when his father died. His mother, Isabella of Hainault, was descended from Ermengarde, one of the daughters of Charles, duke of Lorraine, who, if you remember, disputed the crown with Hugh Capet, and who was the last of the Carlovingian family

who laid claim to the throne of France. Louis thus united in his person the two houses of Charlemagne and Capet. It was perhaps this circumstance that made Philip waive the usual ceremony of having Louis crowned in his own lifetime, a custom which seems to have been adopted by the earlier kings of the house of Capet, to secure to their sons a peaceable succession.

The surname of *Lion* might be supposed, if one did not recollect the flattery of courtiers, to have been given to this king in derision, for he was feeble both in body and in mind. An old writer says of him, that "he was neither to be noted for vices, nor commended for virtues; and his greatest fame consisted in that he was son to an excellent father, and father to an excellent son."

Louis and his queen, Blanch, were crowned at Rheims; and the Parisians, who seem always to have had a great relish for all sorts of triumphant display, celebrated this event with great demonstrations of joy. They hung carpets from their windows, and decorated their public buildings with garlands of flowers: tables covered with provisions were placed in the streets at which the poor were entertained, while minstrels and troubadours paraded the city singing the praises of the new king.

Henry III. of England was summoned as a vassal of France to attend at the coronation. Instead of obeying the summons, he sent to demand the restitution of the provinces which Philip had taken

from his father. This was quite enough to cause a war. Louis took several of the towns belonging to the king of England on the banks of the Garonne, and obliged Savary de Mauleon, who commanded for Henry, to retire to Rochelle, where he waited for some time in expectation of receiving succour from England, particularly money, of which he stood in great need. At length some heavy chests arrived. He expected these to be filled with the promised gold; but when they were opened they were found to contain only pieces of old iron and rubbish. Indignant at this deception, Savary left the service of Henry and went over to the French king. This at least is the account usually given of this affair, though the story seems more probably to have been an invention of Savary to justify his desertion to the enemy.

Only Gascony and Bordeaux now remained to the English of all their former great possessions in France, and of these Louis would probably have made himself master if he had not been drawn away by stronger inducements to engage in the war against the Albigenses.

To this war he had been excited by the exhortations of pope Honorius III., who called upon all the prelates and nobles of France to take upon them the cross, and cleanse (*nettoyer*) the land of heretics. Louis's first enterprise in this war was the siege of Avignon. Avignon was in that part of the ancient kingdom of Arles which had fallen

to the share of the emperor of Germany, but the count of Toulouse had long been considered as its more immediate lord. When the besieging army approached, and demanded a passage through the city, the citizens, unwilling to admit such an undisciplined and lawless body of men within their walls, offered to furnish them with provisions and a safe passage across the Rhone, provided they would pass on without entering the town. This Louis considered as a great affront, and immediately gave orders for an assault. The citizens defended themselves to the utmost, but were at last obliged to capitulate, and Louis entered the city as victor. Fortunately for the inhabitants, the emperor regarded them as under his protection: and Louis, unwilling to offend him, kept the terms of capitulation with more honesty than it was customary to maintain towards heretics. During the siege of Avignon the citizens had undergone great hardships and privations, but the sufferings of the besiegers were still more severe. The weather was intensely hot, and owing to the scarcity of fodder, a prodigious number of horses died, the smell of whose dead bodies occasioned a fever, which, in the course of the siege, carried off 20,000 men. The king himself felt ill, and was incapable of pursuing his farther projects. He was supposed to have been poisoned by Thibaud, count of Champagne, who had a short time before quitted the army on some supposed affront; but it is more pro-

bable that his illness was the prevailing disorder which raged amongst the troops. He bestowed the command of the army, which he was himself obliged to relinquish, on the lord of Beaujeu ; and set out on his return to Paris. On his arrival at the castle of Montpensier, in Auvergne, he found himself unable to proceed farther, and assembling round his bedside the nobles who had accompanied him, he made them swear that they would crown his eldest son. He appointed his queen, Blanch, regent of the kingdom during his son's minority ; and very soon after he had settled these things he breathed his last. He died in October, 1226, in the thirtyninth year of his age. He reigned little more than three years. His children were,

Louis, who succeeded him.

Robert, count of Artois.

Alfonso, count of Poitou.

Charles, count of Anjou.

John.

Isabella, a nun.

There were at this period frequent scarcities, which almost amounted to famine ; and wheat was sometimes sold at six times its usual price.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XIII.

Richard. I have just been thinking of one of the oddest things in the world, which is, that in

your history of England you never said one word about Jersey and Guernsey, and the rest of those little islands, which are the only scraps and shreds left of the duchy of Normandy.

Mrs. Markham. I own, my dear, that it was a very unpardonable neglect, and the best amends I can make for it is, to give you some account of them now. Jersey, the largest, in which is the seat of government, is a pretty island, of about twelve miles long and six broad. It is surrounded by a wall of rocky coast, but the interior is fertile and pleasant. The inclosures are small, and so well surrounded by hedge-row trees as to give the island the appearance at a distance of an entire wood.

George. Are they fine timber trees?

Mrs. M. No, I believe they are principally apple and pear trees. Guernsey is more diversified than Jersey, and very picturesque. Sark and Alderney are very small islands, being not more than two miles across. They are nevertheless fertile and inhabited, and produce, I need not tell you, a breed of small cattle, which is very much prized in England. These islands are governed by the old ducal laws of Normandy. Our king, however, sends a governor, whose usual residence is at St. Helier; and in war-time there is an English garrison. The gentry in these islands all speak English, but Norman-French is still the language of the common people. All law business is carried

on in this language, as is also the service in most of the churches.

Mary. If I went there I should almost suppose myself in France.

Mrs. M. The inhabitants would be very much offended with you if you did. For I understand that notwithstanding their language, customs, and manners bear so strong a resemblance to the French, they pique themselves extremely on being English subjects. You could not offend them more than by comparing them to Frenchmen.

George. It seems very odd to me that the French never tried to get these islands away from us; for they look on the map as if they ought to belong to France much more than to England.

Mrs. M. For a great length of time the kings of France seem to have regarded these islands as not worth having; but in 1779, a force of 5,000 men was fitted out by the French government, and sent in flat-bottomed boats to the attack of Jersey; but the island was vigorously defended by its militia, and the French were compelled to retire. In 1781, another expedition was sent under the command of the Baron de Rullecourt, an arrogant, rash man, who made himself confident of success. He embarked his troops in tempestuous weather, under the notion that he should be more likely at such a time to take the garrison by surprise.

George. He was a pretty arrogant fellow truly, to think that the storm would be complaisant enough to let his boats have free passage.

Mrs. M. As might have been expected, the tempest dispersed his transports. He, however, effected a landing, with about 800 of his men. With these he marched directly to Saint Helier, and did indeed take the garrison by surprise, making them and the governor prisoners. The alarm and consternation throughout the island at this sudden invasion was extreme. Major Pierson, a young and gallant officer, who was at that time in Jersey, immediately collected all the British troops in the island: I do not know exactly how many there were, but their numbers were very inconsiderable. When Rullecourt saw them advancing towards the town, of which he and his 800 men still kept possession, he summoned them to surrender. Their only reply to this command was a furious attack upon the French troops, who were obliged to retreat into the market-place. Here they made a stand, but were again charged by the British with so much vigour, that not a Frenchman escaped, they being all either killed or taken prisoners. Rullecourt was amongst the slain. The governor, whom he had obliged to stand by his side, during the whole engagement, escaped without a wound.

Richard. What a triumph that was for the people of Jersey!

Mrs. M. Alas! their triumph was mixed with bitter grief, for their brave preserver, major Pierson, was killed in the moment of victory. His loss was

most sincerely lamented, and a monument to his memory was erected at the public expense in the church of Saint Helier.

George. I have been thinking very much of the account you gave us yesterday of Paris in the old times; and I should like to know a little what it is like in our time.

Mrs. M. I will endeavour to satisfy you as well as I can; but as I have never seen Paris, you must be contented with such a description as I have been able to make out from the accounts of others. Paris is, I understand, surrounded by walls, which extend considerably beyond the buildings of the town. Hence there are gardens, and even fields, within the walls. The town is entered by several gates or barriers, many of them of exceedingly beautiful architecture; but they must have the appearance, I should imagine, of being somewhat out of their place. Within the walls are the Boulevards, which is a wide road shaded by rows of trees, and which forms a circuit round the central part of the city, a considerable way within the walls. These Boulevards are in fine weather the daily resort of the Parisians. Here they saunter about under the shade of the trees, amusing themselves with mountebanks, dancing dogs, and ballad singers, and a variety of persons of the same description with which the place is thronged.

Mary. What an amusing place it must be!

Mrs. M. The Parisians pass much more time out of doors than we do. Indeed they have every temptation to do so ; for besides the Boulevards there are the gardens of the Luxemburg, the Tuilleries, and the Jardin des Plantes, and innumerable other places of attraction. The streets, I am told, are narrow, dirty, and gloomy. The kennels are all in the middle of the streets, and there are no flagged pavements for the accommodation of foot-passengers, who are in continual danger of being run over by carriages. At night the danger is still greater, the streets being very ill lighted.

Richard. But don't the drivers of the carriages take care not to hurt people ?

Mrs. M. A Parisian coachman thinks he does quite enough for the protection of the public by bawling out as he drives " Gare ! gare !" None but the lower orders of the people walk in the streets of Paris, and he deems it their business to get out of his way.

Richard. Is the Seine a fine river ?

Mrs. M. It will in itself bear no comparison with the Thames at London ; but it is rendered a greater ornament to the city than our river is, by the spacious quays with which the banks on each side are lined, which, being paved with flag-stones, form very delightful and magnificent walks.

George. Are the houses in Paris built of brick or stone ?

Mrs. M. They have the appearance of being

built of stone, but I am told that a great proportion of them are only coated with a cement resembling it. The churches and public buildings are many of them very splendid; and the absence of fogs and coal-fires enables them to retain their freshness much longer than they would do amid the smoke of London.

Richard. I think you said yesterday that Philip Augustus built the cathedral of Notre Dame in what was then a new kind of architecture. Is it at all like any of our cathedrals?

Mrs. M. The shortest answer to your question is this outline of the front, by which you will see that although it is evidently in what is called the Gothic style, it yet differs materially from any Gothic buildings in England*.

Mary. Are the village churches in France like ours?

Mrs. M. Here is a view of one from Mr. Cotman's tour in Normandy.



Church of Querqueville, near Cherbourg.

* See the vignette at the head of Chapter XI.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOUIS IX., OR SAINT LOUIS.

[Years after Christ 1226—1270.]



Blanch of Castile.

St. Louis.

QUEEN Blanch, who had been appointed regent by the late king during the minority of her son, who was only eleven years old, immediately took upon herself the management of affairs. The greater part of the nobles were highly displeased that a woman, and more particularly that a Spanish

woman, should presume to rule over them, and they conspired against her authority. But Blanch, who possessed a strong and vigorous understanding, defeated their schemes by the decision and promptitude of her conduct; she maintained her power till her son had attained his twenty-first year, and then resigned the regency, though by the wish of her son, who paid her great deference, she continued for a time to take a part in the government.

Louis had a truly upright and benevolent disposition. His temper was mild and forgiving, and at the same time brave and firm. In prosperity no man had more meekness, nor in adversity more fortitude. Under all circumstances, his integrity was inflexible, and he was governed solely by religious principle. It is only to be lamented that the superstitious temper of the times drew him rashly into new crusades against the infidels, undertakings ruinous to his country, and which at last proved fatal to himself.

He first took the cross in 1244, in consequence of a dangerous illness, during which he had made a vow, that if he recovered he would go to the Holy Land. His mother and all his wisest counsellors vehemently opposed the project; but his resolution being taken, nothing would induce him to alter it; and all they could obtain was a promise that he would do nothing that should endanger the welfare of his kingdom, and that he would not

go till he could leave all his affairs in proper order. This he immediately set about doing, "and never," says an old historian, "was an imprudent design more prudently executed."

In 1248, four years after he had taken the cross, Louis, having appointed his mother regent during his absence, departed for the Holy Land, taking with him his queen, Margaret of Provence, and his three brothers, the counts of Artois, of Provence, and of Anjou.

He embarked in August, with part of his forces, at Aigues-Mortes in Languedoc, and sailed first to Cyprus, where he continued till the following June, waiting the arrival of the rest of his armament, which, when completed, amounted to above 50,000 men. When every thing was in readiness for leaving Cyprus, the fleet steered towards the coast of Egypt, it being determined to begin by attacking, on his own ground, the sultan of that country, who was now the chief enemy of the cause of the Latins. Louis effected a landing near Damietta; and during the night the inhabitants, being seized with a panic, evacuated the town, and fled with their families and moveable effects. The French entered the forsaken town the next day, and took possession of it. It was the intention of the king to have advanced immediately into Egypt; but owing to the annual inundation of the Nile, he was detained at Damietta until November.

Here Louis had the inexpressible grief to see

his nobles give themselves up to the most unbridled licentiousness, which neither his example nor his reproofs could restrain. He himself did all he could to provide for the future necessities of the army. He collected all the provisions and treasures that were found in the town, and laid them by in store-houses for the public benefit, to the great displeasure of the French knights, who would have been better pleased to have had them distributed amongst themselves.

When the waters had abated, Louis prepared to leave Damietta; but he first repaired and strengthened the fortifications, and placed a strong garrison in the town. He then departed, leaving the queen with her ladies at Damietta, and took the way to Cairo; but he soon became entangled amongst the canals, with which the country is intersected. At last he came to a canal which it was impossible to pass, and here, although continually harassed by flying troops of the enemy, the army began to construct a causeway, which might serve as a bridge. While they were so employed, a ford was accidentally found. The count of Artois with two thousand men dashed through it, and, contrary to the advice of all the experienced persons who knew the country, advanced to the town of Massoura. The inhabitants having concealed themselves in their houses, the French imagined the place to be deserted, and immediately began to plunder it. While they were thus en-

gaged, the inhabitants appeared at the tops of their houses, and threw down showers of stones on them. At the same moment they were also attacked in front by a large body of Turkish troops. The count of Artois and many of his men were slain, and the rest were only saved by the timely arrival of the king with the main army.

Louis beat off the Turks from Massoura, and forced them to retire; but their numbers were reinforced by the daily arrival of fresh troops, and the king at last found it impossible to proceed. He therefore took possession of the strongest position he could find, and encamped. The Turks now surrounded him on all sides, and with their Greek fire destroyed his machines of war. His army was cut off from procuring provisions: a dreadful sickness broke out in the camp, and the soldiers were soon in a most deplorable condition. The king himself fell ill, and to use the words of an old chronicle, "being sick in bed, had nothing but courage to maintain life."

His own sufferings did not, however, make him unmindful of those of his people, and he gave orders that the sick should be conveyed back to Damietta in some French galleys, that had advanced up the river. They were embarked accordingly, but before they could get away, the galleys were seized by the Turks, who murdered all the sick, and threw their bodies overboard. At the same time another body of the Turks attacked the camp; and

although the king was so ill, that he could scarcely sit upon his horse, he rode amongst the ranks, till at last he fainted from excessive weakness. In that condition he was taken prisoner by the Turks; the defeat of the whole army followed, and all who were not slain were taken prisoners.

This event took place April 5, 1250. When the news of this great calamity reached France, the grief and desolation of the people was excessive. Blanch did not long survive it. She died partly from grief at her son's captivity, and partly from remorse at having had two persons executed as spreaders of false news, who had first reported the defeat of the army.

Louis in the mean time had to endure many insults from the infidels, and he might have endured worse treatment at their hands, had it not been for the great desire of Malec-sala, the sultan, to regain Damietta, which he knew was so strongly garrisoned, that he could more easily obtain it by treaty than by force. At last it was agreed that Louis and all his people should be restored to their liberty, on giving up that town, and also paying a ransom of four hundred thousand pounds of silver. Before the terms of this treaty could be fully adjusted, Malec-sala was murdered by his emirs. During the tumult which this event occasioned, the life of Louis was in considerable jeopardy, and it is supposed that he owed his preservation to the courage and tranquillity of his demeanour, which

inspired the Turks with a respect for him. When the tumult had subsided, the new sultan ratified the treaty which his predecessor had made with the Christians, and farther conceded to them a ten years' truce. Thus Louis, after a captivity of about two months, regained his liberty. He then, instead of returning to Europe, immediately proceeded to Acre, where the queen joined him. I must not omit to mention, that finding there had been some error in the amount of the sum which had been paid for his ransom, he afterwards made good the deficiency. His courtiers, I believe, thought him over honest; but Louis reproved them, and made them know that he valued his honour too highly to forfeit it for silver or gold.

Louis spent four years in Palestine, and employed himself with as much earnestness in repairing the strong towns, and in redressing the grievances of the people, as if it had been his own country. He redeemed 12,000 Christians from slavery; and when he had put the Christian possessions in Syria in a proper state of defence, he returned to France. He landed at Marseilles July 2, 1254, having been absent about six years. The lord of Joinville, who attended Louis during the greater part of that time, has left us a very entertaining and interesting history of this crusade.

The king was received in France with every demonstration of joy; but it was observed with regret that he still continued to wear the cross upon his

upper garment, a sign that he still nourished the design of going again to Palestine.

He maintained at this time great state and regularity in his court; but in his own dress and manners he rather affected the plainness of a private man than the pomp of a great prince. He earnestly applied himself to the reformation of all abuses; he revoked many oppressive taxes, which the necessities of preceding times had produced; he made regulations, which were much needed, for the police of the cities; and he formed a code of laws, which still goes by his name. It must have been a charming sight to have seen this good king sitting under the shade of a tree, (which is still standing in the Bois de Vincennes, near Paris,) surrounded by his subjects, and attending to the complaints of the poor and redressing their grievances.

The perfect integrity of Louis's character inspired universal confidence. He was often called upon to settle the disputes of neighbouring princes, and instead of fomenting quarrels, as had been the general policy of preceding kings, he always endeavoured to be a promoter of peace. Sometimes he was required to give judgment in causes in which his own interests were concerned. On all such occasions he uniformly decided with the most unrepached and perfect impartiality. Louis also aimed at another virtue, which is but rarely practised, the virtue of *restitution*. He appointed com-

missioners to inquire what possessions had, during the last two reigns, been unjustly annexed to the royal domains. These he caused to be restored to the right owners, and in cases where the owner could not be ascertained, he distributed the value amongst the poor. He always declared that "it was good policy to be just; for that a reputation for probity and disinterestedness created authority, and gave a prince more *real* power than any accession of territory could do." It is certain that Louis by this upright and wise conduct preserved peace in his dominions, and brought the affairs of his kingdom into better order than any former king had been able to do.

Charles, count of Anjou, was of a very different character from his brother; he was ambitious, covetous, cruel, and unforgiving. Most unhappily for Italy, Pope Nicholas III. made him an offer of the crown of the Two Sicilies; that is, the island of Sicily and the kingdom of Naples. This crown had fallen into the hands of the imperial family, by the marriage of the heiress of the last Norman king of Sicily with the father of the Emperor Frederic II. When Frederic died, the crown of the Sicilies was seized by Mainfroi, his natural son. The pope, wishing to get it out of the hands of the Ghibelins, or emperor's party, offered it to Charles of Anjou. Charles could not resist the temptation of being a king, and in 1265, having collected an army, he encountered Mainfroi at Beneventum. Mainfroi

was defeated and slain, and Charles took possession of his dominions. He began his reign (and indeed I may also say he ended it) with so many acts of cruelty, that he made the very name of Frenchman hateful to the Sicilians, and his memory is even now held by them in detestation.

In 1267, several of the princes of Germany joined Conradin, the son of Conrad IV., the last emperor of the line of Swabia, in an endeavour to drive the French out of Italy; but the German army was defeated by the French. Conradin was made prisoner and carried to Naples, and Charles, contrary to the established faith amongst princes, caused him to be beheaded, as if he had been a traitor. Conradin was the last descendant of his ancient family; he was brave and generous, and Charles, by putting him to death, incurred a no less general than just detestation. Conradin, when on the scaffold, threw down his glove amongst the crowd, beseeching some one to convey it to any of his kinsmen, who would receive it as a pledge of investiture in his rights, and as bequeathing the obligation to revenge his death.

Louis in the mean time had, by fair and honest means, increased his dominions. In 1258, on the marriage of his eldest son Philip with Isabella, daughter of the king of Aragon, he made a treaty with that king, in which it was agreed that France should resign all right, a right indeed little more than nominal, over that part of Spain, which

Charlemagne had conquered from the Saracens. The king of Aragon, on his part, agreed to give up to Louis the more substantial possession of several towns in the south of France (with the exception of Montpellier), which he had inherited by the marriage of one of his ancestors with an heiress of the family of Provence. Louis had also, some time previously, purchased a part of Champagne from the earl Thibaud, who now, in right of his mother, had succeeded to the kingdom of Navarre.

To Henry III. of England Louis yielded up the possession of those places in Guienne which his father Louis VIII. had won. He did this on condition that Henry should resign all claim to Anjou and Normandy. Some of his courtiers blamed him for yielding them up, but he justified himself to them by urging the policy of maintaining peace by making a small concession.

England had long been in a state of anarchy, In 1263 Louis was called upon to settle the differences between Henry and his barons. Louis blamed both parties; he told the barons that they should treat their king with more respect, and advised Henry to observe the terms of the Great Charter, which his father had sworn solemnly to observe. This advice was too wise and temperate to suit the inflamed minds of either party; and the civil dissensions of England continued to rage with as much violence as before. I need not here tell

you of the able and successful part which Henry's son, prince Edward, took in his father's affairs; nor that when he had restored tranquillity in England, his ardent spirit panted for active employment, and that he gladly joined with the king of France in a crusade.

Louis, who had never lost sight of this favourite project, having a fleet and all things in readiness, embarked at Aigues-Mortes early in July 1270. He was accompanied by his three eldest sons, by his brother Alfonso, his nephew Robert of Artois, Thibaud king of Navarre, Guy earl of Flanders, and by many other persons of great distinction. The young prince of England and Charles of Anjou, who agreed to follow with a numerous army from Sicily, were expected to join him in the course of the summer.

Louis, after having narrowly escaped from a fearful tempest, landed in Sardinia. Circumstances here determined him to make an attack on Tunis before he proceeded to the Holy Land. His ships accordingly put to sea again, and, after a safe voyage, anchored off the shore of ancient Carthage. Carthage was soon taken, and the siege of Tunis begun: but in a few weeks the army was seen to suffer from the excessive heat of the climate. The plague broke out in the camp, and destroyed great numbers of men. The king himself was seized with it, and soon found himself on the brink of death. Sending for his eldest son, he gave him a

manuscript which he had written with his own hands, and which contained directions for his future conduct. He gave him an earnest exhortation to govern his people with justice and equity, and to make the fear of God the rule of all his actions. He then desired to be lifted from his bed, and laid amongst ashes on the floor of his tent. He expired exclaiming, "I will enter thy house. I will worship in thy sanctuary."

Just at that moment the fleet of Charles of Anjou arrived. As soon as he landed, he sounded his trumpet, and was surprised to hear no answering sound. Alarmed by the silence that pervaded the camp, he mounted a horse and galloped towards the royal pavillion, where the first object he saw was his brother's corpse extended upon the ashes.

Louis's son Philip, now become king, fell ill himself soon afterwards. In this emergency the kings of Sicily and Navarre took upon themselves the command of the army. In the royal obsequies a strange custom was followed, which was then often observed in the case of persons who died in a foreign land. The flesh of the corpse was separated from the bones. The bones were consigned to Philip to be conveyed to France; Charles retained the flesh, and, when he returned to Sicily, had it interred in the abbey of Montereale, near Palermo.

Louis died August 25th, 1270, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and forty-fourth of his reign. He

married Margaret of Provence, and had four sons and four daughters :

Philip, who succeeded his father.

John Tristan.

Peter.

Robert, married Beatrice of Burgundy, whose mother was heiress of the lords of Bourbon. Robert took the title of Bourbon, and it was by descent from him that three hundred years afterwards Henry IV. claimed and obtained the crown of France.

Isabella, married Thibaud II., king of Navarre.

Blanch, married Ferdinand Cerdo, infante of Castile.

Margaret, married the duke of Brabant.

Agnes, married the duke of Burgundy.

Louis established a charity for blind persons, which still subsists. He also built several churches and monasteries within the walls of Paris ; but still he did not, as many of his predecessors had done, regard the founding a religious house as an expiation of sin. He used to say when speaking on this subject, " that living men were the stones of God's temple, and that the church was more beautified by good manners than by rich walls."

Nearly thirty years after his death he was canonized by pope Urban VIII.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XIV.

George. I wish I knew what became of that glove which Conradin threw down amongst the people.

Mrs. Markham. I believe I can tell you. It was taken up by a knight of the name of Truches, who carried it to Pedro III., king of Aragon; and the descendants of that knight have always borne the arms of Swabia, in commemoration of the circumstance.

George. And what did the king of Aragon do, when he got the glove? Did he revenge the death of Conradin?

Mrs. M. He did indeed, most dreadfully, as you shall hear when we come to the story of the Sicilian Vespers in the next chapter.

Mary. Pray, mamma, did that poor old earl of Flanders, who was so long in prison, ever get his liberty again?

Mrs. M. Queen Blanch, during her regency, set him at liberty, not so much, perhaps, out of kindness to him, as to plague his wife, the countess Jane. It would have been as well if Blanch had released at the same time his companion in arms, the old count of Boulogne, who, when he found that the earl of Flanders had regained his liberty,

and that he himself remained forgotten in prison, put an end to his life in a fit of despair.

Mary. Don't you think Blanch was very cruel to let the poor old man remain in prison ?

Mrs. M. Blanch was a violent and high-spirited woman ; but she showed on many occasions, although perhaps not on this, a very feeling heart. It happened that some villagers, who were serfs to the canons of Notre Dame, refused to pay some contribution which their lords demanded of them. The canons in great displeasure thrust these poor serfs into prison. The prison was so small, that they could scarcely move, and were almost suffocated for want of air. When the queen heard of it she was exceedingly shocked, and sent to desire the canons to set the men free, and offered to be surety for the money demanded of them.

Mary. The canons must have been very much obliged to her.

Mrs. M. So far from being obliged, they were very much offended, and said that she had no right to interfere in what they chose to do with their slaves. Accordingly, instead of setting the men at liberty, they caused all their wives and families to be shut up in the same place, where many of them actually died of suffocation. On this, the queen proceeded to the prison with her attendants, and ordered them to force open the doors ; but so great was the dread of incurring the displeasure of the

church, that none had courage to obey her. The queen herself then took up an instrument, and struck the first blow. Thus encouraged, her attendants presently forced the door, and the prisoners were brought out. Many of them fainted at the queen's feet from the effects of the fresh air; but those who were able to speak loaded her with thanks and blessings. Her kindness did not rest here, for she freed them from the power of the canons, by enfranchising them and their children.

George. If Blanch governed in that way, she deserved to be regent.

Richard. Pray, mamma, have you ever read that lord Joinville's history, and can you tell us something about it?

Mrs. M. Lord Joinville was a nobleman of high rank; he was seneschal of Champagne, and was attached to the service of Thibaud, king of Navarre, and accompanied him on the crusade. After Joinville had taken the cross, but before he joined Thibaud's army, he summoned all his vassals and friends and kinsmen to his castle, and there entertained them for a week with all manner of feasting and merriment. Before he dismissed them, he told them that he was going to the holy war and might never return, and desired that if there was any one there to whom he had done wrong, he would come forwards, and he should receive amends. Joinville does not say whether any of them did so or not, but he goes on to tell us, that he then set out on

pilgrimages to various holy places in the neighbourhood, determining when he left his castle not to enter it again till he returned from the holy wars. In the course of these pilgrimages, which he made barefooted and in his shirt, he often had to pass in sight of his own home; and he says, "I did not dare turn my eyes that way, for fear of feeling too great regret, and lest my courage should fail on leaving my two fine children, and my fair castle of Joinville, which I loved to my heart."

Mary. I think it was very hard upon his children that he would not go and wish them good-bye.

Mrs. M. Here is a little sketch of his "fair castle."* Joinville having joined the troops of the king of Navarre, sailed with them to Cyprus, where he first saw the king of France, who was so much pleased with his company, that from that time he had him constantly near him, and often asked his opinion and advice.

George. If you please, mamma, you need not tell us the whole of what this lord Joinville says, but only that part about the king being taken prisoner.

Mrs. M. You recollect, then, that after the battle at Massoura, the French were in great distress for provisions, the enemy having cut off all their supplies. A pestilential disorder also broke

* See the vignette at the end of this conversation.

out. This was occasioned partly by the smell of the dead bodies, which had been thrown into the canal after the battle, and which had been stopped in their passage, as they floated towards the Nile, by a small bridge near the camp ; and partly, as was supposed, by the poor, famished soldiers having eaten eels which had fed upon the putrid bodies. The army was now in no condition to combat the Turks, who were advancing on all sides of it. On the day of the attack, the king, after defending himself as long as he was able, was at last obliged to retire from the heat of the combat, and to give you the good seneschal's own words, " Of all his men at arms there was only one with him, the good knight sir Geoffrey de Sergine, and who, I heard say, defended him in like manner as a faithful servant defends the cup of his master from flies ; for every time the Saracens approached the king, he guarded him with vigorous strokes of the blade and point of his sword, and it seemed as if his strength was doubled.—At last he brought him to a house where there was a woman from Paris, and taking the king off his horse, he laid him on the ground, with his head on the woman's lap, and expected that every moment he would breathe his last." Louis was found in this state by the Saracens, who bore him off to the sultan's tent. As to what farther befel the king at that time Joinville is silent, being too much taken up with his own adventures, which were indeed sufficiently distressing.

Richard. I should like to hear what his adventures were.

Mrs. M. Being very ill, he had gone on board a galley, in the hope of being conveyed with the rest of the sick to Damietta; but the vessel had scarcely moved from its station before the boats of the enemy appeared on all sides. They began an attack upon the nearest galleys, and poor Joinville, as he lay upon the deck, expecting his own turn to come every minute, saw the Saracens ransacking the other vessels, and dragging forth the crew and the passengers. The strong and healthy they took prisoners, the weak and ill they threw into the river. At last they boarded Joinville's galley, and he thought his last hour was come. But one of the Saracens, either because he heard the sailors say that Joinville was the king's cousin, or, as we may rather hope, from real compassion, took him under his protection.

Mary. What made the sailors tell such a fib?

Mrs. M. They thought, I believe, that it might induce the Saracens to save Joinville's life in hopes of a ransom; but they might have spared themselves the falsehood, for the Saracens seemed to be actuated by better motives. As soon as they reached the shore, a number of men rushed at Joinville with drawn swords, to cut his throat. "I felt," says he, "the knife at my throat, and had already cast myself on my knees; but God delivered me from this peril by the aid of my poor Saracen, who

led me to the castle where the Saracen chiefs were assembled." Here he was treated with tolerable kindness, and his "good Saracen" gave him a beverage, which in two days restored him to health. He was afterwards taken to the place where the king and the rest of the army were confined.

Mary. What became of the queen and the poor ladies who were left at Damietta?

Mrs. M. It was expected that the Saracens would immediately assault the town, and the French ladies were, as you may suppose, in great alarm, especially the queen, who was daily expecting to be brought to bed. She was in such continual terror, that she thought every noise she heard was the approach of the Saracens, and was for ever shrieking out, "Help—help, the Saracens are coming!" She had "an ancient knight," whom she would scarcely ever permit to leave her; and one day she threw herself on her knees before him, and in the greatest agony besought him that he would cut off her head the instant the Saracens should storm the city, that she might not fall alive into 'their hands. To this the ancient knight replied, that he begged she would make herself perfectly easy, for it was what he had already determined in his own mind to do, even if she had not desired it.

George. And that comforted her, I hope.

Mrs. M. In the midst of these alarms she was brought to bed of a son, who received the name of

Tristan, "because that he was born in misery and poverty." The queen was obliged to quit Damietta soon afterwards, on account of its being given up to the Turks, and she joined the king at Acre.

Mary. How glad they must have been to have met again after all their perils !

Mrs. M. In the midst of every peril, the pious king never for a moment forgot his trust in God. When he finally quitted Palestine, and was on his voyage back to France, he would often recal the attention of his people to the power and mercy of God ; and would frequently exhort them, " to examine themselves well, to see that there was nothing in their conduct displeasing to God ; beseeching them, if there was, to instantly clear themselves of it."

Mary. I think it would keep one always good, to live with such a man as this king Louis was.

Mrs. M. The society of the good and wise is one of the greatest blessings which God can bestow upon us in this life. I trust, my dear children, that whenever you have the enjoyment of this blessing, you will not let it be thrown away upon you, but will endeavour to profit by it, to your own advancement in wisdom and virtue.

Richard. Did this entertaining lord of Joinville go with St. Louis the second time ?

Mrs. M. No ; the seneschal excused himself, by saying that he found on his return from the former

expedition that his poor people had been so much oppressed and ill-treated, that he could not, in consideration to the duty he owed them, leave them again. He lived honoured and respected to a very great age; I believe he was upwards of a hundred years old when he died. His book appears to have been written at the request of the queen. He says, that "she, knowing with how much loyalty and love he had served and attended the deceased king, her spouse, earnestly entreated him, in honour of God, to write a small book or treatise of the holy actions and sayings of the above mentioned Saint Louis."



Castle of Joinville.

CHAPTER XV.

PHILIP III., SURNAMED LE HARDI.

[Years after Christ, 1270—1286.]



ROBERT, COUNT OF CLERMONT,
son of St. Louis, and ancestor of Henry IV.

THE LADY OF BOURBON,
wife of Robert de Clermont.

IN the last chapter we left the French army before Tunis, sinking under the effects of fatigue and sickness. The young king would gladly have returned to Europe, could he have followed his own wishes ; but being totally incapacitated by illness, he was obliged for a time to give up the command of the army to his uncle, Charles of Anjou, who had

views of his own in continuing the siege. After passing three months in useless endeavours to reduce the town, Charles yielded to the earnest entreaties of Philip, who had now regained his health, and entered into negotiation with the king of Tunis. A treaty was at last concluded, by which the French agreed to raise the siege, on condition that they should be indemnified for all the expense they had been at: that Charles should receive a tribute from the king of Tunis; and that all the Christian slaves should be set free.

Philip embarked for Europe in the end of the year 1270, and landed in Sicily. Here his queen died, in consequence of a fall from her horse. Here also died Thibaud, king of Navarre, of the plague; and the same disorder, not long afterwards, caused the death of Alphonso, the king's uncle, and of his wife, the countess of Provence, who died at Sienna in their way to France. These sad events were a melancholy beginning of the new reign. Philip remained in Sicily till the following spring, when he returned to France, bringing with him the remains of his father and of his queen, who were buried with great funeral pomp in the abbey of Saint Denis.

Philip was at this time twenty-five years old; he resembled in many respects his excellent father: he was pious, liberal, and just; but he was greatly his inferior in understanding, and was so singularly simple and credulous, that he was perpetually liable

to be duped. It has been remarked of him, "that he was fond of meddling in the affairs of other princes, and began many great undertakings, and completed none;" a sufficient argument of his folly. How he deserved the surname of the "Hardi," which we translate the "Bold," I am at a loss to determine; for certainly none of his actions entitled him to that epithet. I have, however, seen it thus accounted for. When he was a little boy in the expedition to Egypt, he used to laugh at his mother and her women for being afraid of the Saracens, and would boast, more from childish ignorance than from courage, that "he did not fear them at all."

It is, however, but justice to say, that notwithstanding the deficiencies in Philip's character, his people were happy and prosperous during his reign, and the French esteem him as one amongst their very few good kings.

In 1274, Philip married a second wife, Maria of Brabant. The king had at that time a great favourite named Pierre de la Brosse, whom he had raised from the condition of a barber to be his chief minister. This man took a hatred to the new queen, because he found that she had more influence with the king than he had, and he determined to effect her ruin if possible. He soon believed that he had found an opportunity. Prince Louis, the king's eldest son, died in 1276, and De la Brosse procured a false witness to accuse the queen of having poi-

soned her son-in-law. Maria was in great distress at this dreadful accusation, and might have found it difficult to have proved her innocence, had not her brother sent her a champion, who offered to prove it by single combat with her accuser. The accuser being worsted in the combat, or according to some authors having refused to accept the challenge, was hung on a gibbet as a traitor and coward, and the queen was declared innocent.

Philip's sister Blanch had married the king of Castile's eldest son, who died in 1276, and left two sons. These children were shut up in prison by their uncle Sancho, who declared himself the heir to the crown, and who, although his father, king Alfonso, was living, took upon himself the management of every thing. Indeed Alfonso was very willing that he should do so; for he was so much absorbed in mathematical studies, and in writing the history of Castile, that he paid little attention to passing affairs.

The king of France undertook the cause of the poor imprisoned children, and assembling an army, set forth into Spain; but Sancho contrived to corrupt one of Philip's courtiers, who gave him constant intelligence of what was going on in the French camp. Philip, after a short time, finding his army in distress for provisions, returned to Paris without having advanced beyond Bearn.

Soon after his return he received a sealed packet, and the moment he had read it he changed counte-

nance, and ordered that De la Brosse should be immediately hung on a high gibbet which had been lately erected in Paris. It was never known what were the contents of the packet which caused this sudden anger in the king against his favourite ; but it is supposed that it contained a disclosure that De la Brosse was the traitor who had betrayed the king's secrets to the Castilians.

While these things were going on in France, in Italy Charles of Anjou was increasing in power and in ambition. He is said to have aspired to both empires, the East and the West. He purchased the title of king of Jerusalem of the granddaughter of old Guy de Lusignan. This title, though it did not add to his power or territory, added to his pride and helped to increase the number of his enemies. Amongst these he now reckoned the pope, Nicholas III., who, from being his friend, was become his deadly foe, having been made so by Charles's refusal to agree to a marriage between one of his daughters and the pope's nephew. Pedro III., of Aragon, who had married a daughter of Manfroi, and claimed the crown of Sicily in her right, was also another of Charles's avowed enemies. Pedro and Nicholas conspired together against him, and contrived one of the most horrible plots that ever entered into the heart of man, which was no less than to massacre all the French in Sicily, and so to extirpate them from the island. The Sicilians readily entered into the plot

which was in agitation two years, and was so secretly conducted that nothing transpired to give the French any warning of their approaching fate.

The principal agent employed by the conspirators was John of Procida, once lord of a small island in the Gulf of Naples, but of which he had been deprived by Charles. This man, animated by a spirit of revenge and hatred, devoted his whole time and thoughts to the furtherance of the plot, and travelled about from place to place, sometimes in the disguise of a physician, and sometimes of a friar.

Michael Palæologus, emperor of Constantinople, was also privy to the design; but it does not appear that he took any active part in the execution of it. In the midst of these machinations, Pope Nicholas died, and was succeeded by Martin IV. who was totally ignorant of what was going on.

Pedro and John of Procida were not discouraged by the loss of their confederate, and only hastened their measures the more. It had been at first resolved to strike the blow at a time when Charles himself should be in Sicily, that he also might fall with the rest of his countrymen; but, on consideration, the conspirators feared that his vigilance and activity might disconcert their plans; they therefore determined to seize an opportunity, during his absence, of effecting their dreadful purpose.

At length every thing being ripe for execution,

Easter eve, 1282, was the day appointed for the massacre; and the ringing of the vesper-bell, at five o'clock in the afternoon, was to be the signal to the assassins. At that hour, as the French, in ignorant security, were sitting at supper, the infuriate Sicilians rushed upon them, and in the short space of two hours there was not a Frenchman left alive in the island, with the exception of one man alone whose life was spared on account of his extraordinary probity. The name of this man deserves to be remembered. He was Guillaume de Pourcelets, a gentleman of Provence*.

It is estimated that eight thousand persons fell in this massacre, which is known by the name of the Sicilian Vespers.

When Charles was informed of what had passed in Sicily, he became absolutely furious with passion. He hastened to Messina with all the forces he could muster, and laid siege to it; but the Sicilians, who well knew his unsparing temper, defended themselves with the bravery of desperation, and Charles found himself obliged to retire to Calabria, and there wait for fresh reinforcements.

Pedro, all this time, had not been idle. Under the pretence that he was going on a crusade, he had craftily borrowed money from the king of France, and had equipped a fleet and army. He now appeared before Sicily, and landing at Palermo

* In some of the accounts the name of one other person is also recorded as having been saved for the same reason.

about the end of August, 1282, was proclaimed king. His object being to gain time, he had next recourse to an unworthy stratagem to induce Charles to a suspension of hostilities. He sent him a message to this effect, "that, old and broken down, as they both were, and unfit for combats, they were yet, such as they were, equal to each other; and he invited him to decide this quarrel by single combat, each to be attended by a hundred chosen knights."

Charles, who was more chivalrous than wise, accepted this challenge, and granted a truce till the first of July, 1283, the day appointed for the combat. Edward I. of England, who acted in some sort as a mediator between the parties, proposed that the meeting should take place on a plain near Bordeaux.

On the first of July, an immense concourse of persons of all nations assembled to see the fight, and as soon as the sun was risen, Charles, punctual to his appointment, appeared on the plain with his hundred knights. There he remained till the sun went down, expecting his antagonist; but none appeared, and Charles retired from the field burning with fresh rage.

Pedro, however, did come to Bordeaux in the evening of that day. Affecting a mighty fear lest the king of France (who had never once entertained such a thought) should seize his person, he deposited his arms with the seneschal of Bordeaux,

as a testimony of his having kept his appointment, and then hastily departed.

The pope and the king of France were now roused against Pedro, and the pope, to show his disapprobation of his unknightly conduct, degraded him from his royal station, and bestowed the kingdom of Aragon on Charles of Valois, second son of the king of France. Pedro laughed at the anathemas of the pope. He collected a numerous fleet, and gave the command of it to De Lauria, the most famous admiral of his day. With this fleet De Lauria appeared before Naples, which, in the absence of Charles of Anjou, was governed by his son, Charles the Lame. He being, like his father, more brave than prudent, engaged De Lauria with unequal forces. He was taken prisoner, and was carried to Messina, where the Sicilians would have beheaded him, in revenge for the death of Conradin, which was still fresh in their memories, had not Constance, Pedro's queen, rescued him from their hands, and sent him under safe custody to Spain.

The captivity of his son, together with his affront at Bordeaux, drove Charles almost to frenzy. He hurried from place to place, and from city to city, till the agitation of his mind threw him into a fever, of which he died January 7th, 1285. His nephew, Robert of Artois, was appointed to the regency of Naples during the captivity of Charles the Lame.

We must now return to Philip, from whom the affairs of Charles of Anjou have so long detained

us. In 1285 he marched with an army towards Spain, with the design of securing to his son Charles the gift which the pope had made him of the crown of Aragon. Pedro, who had no intention of yielding up his kingdom at the will of the pope, met the French army on the confines of Spain. He received a mortal wound in an ambuscade, and died, leaving the kingdom of Aragon to Alfonso, his eldest son, and that of Sicily to James, his second son.

Philip's arms had at first some little success; but a fleet, which was laden with provisions for his army, being taken by De Lauria, he was so greatly disheartened by this misfortune, and also so much broken down by sickness, that he resolved to abandon all farther attempts on Aragon, and to return home. But he could get no farther than Perpignan, where he expired, October 6th, 1286. He was in the forty-first year of his age, and had reigned sixteen years. By his first wife, Isabella of Aragon, he had three sons :

- Louis, died young ;
- Philip, succeeded his father ;
Charles, count of Valois.
- By his second wife, Maria of Brabant, he had one son and two daughters :
 - Louis, count of Evreux ;
 - Margaret, married Edward I. king of England ;
 - Blanch, married the duke of Austria.

Mary of Brabant was a great encourager of poets.

By the death, without children, of Philip's uncle, Alphonso, and of his wife, who was heiress of Toulouse, the territories of the ancient counts of Toulouse devolved to the crown of France.

Thibaud, king of Navarre, had been succeeded by his brother, Henry the Fat, who died in 1274, leaving an infant daughter. The kings of Castile and Aragon each tried to obtain the young queen for one of their own sons; but her mother fled with her to France, and placed her under the protection of Philip; and in 1284 she married Philip, the king's then eldest son, who assumed the title of king of Navarre.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XV.

Richard. As that queen, Maria of Brabant, was an encourager of poets, I hope she afforded some protection to the poor troubadours.

Mrs. Markham. Either the troubadours were all destroyed in the wars with the Albigenses, or else the taste for their poetry was gone by; for we hear no more of them after this time, and their light and lively songs were succeeded by a grave

and allegorical kind of poetry. The Romance of the Rose, which was begun by a poet in the reign of St. Louis, and finished by another poet who lived thirty years later, was one of the most popular of these poems.

Richard. I always thought it was written by Chaucer, our old English poet.

Mrs. M. Chaucer's poem of the Romance of the Rose is a translation, or, to speak more properly, an imitation of the French poem. I do not exactly know how many verses Chaucer has in his Romance of the Rose, but the original one consisted of 20,000.

Mary. I hope it was very entertaining, since it was so long.

Mrs. M. It was the history of an imaginary dream.

George. A dream of 20,000 verses! I would not read it through, no not to have a holiday all the rest of the year!

Mrs. M. It was, however, much prized and admired in its day, and contained a description and personification of every possible human virtue and vice. At a time when people had so few books, it was a great merit in a book to be long.

Mary. When so few people could read, they could not want many books.

Mrs. M. They seem to have made the most of those they had. In most families, the priest, and any one else who could read, were expected to

entertain the rest by reading aloud to them. Few houses were provided with more than one book ; and when that one was read through, a new book was never thought of, but the old one was begun over again.

Mary. If I had lived in those days, and could have chosen, I would have lived in a house or a castle where the book was a romance, and not a dull, tedious allegory.

Mrs. M. The old romances were nearly as dull and tedious as the allegories, and a great deal more absurd. In them truth and fiction were strangely intermingled, with a ingenious disregard of all historical and geographical probabilities. For instance, in one of them (of which I forget the name) Babylon is introduced into France, and placed on the confines of Bretagne ; and Judea is described as the adjoining country to Ireland. One of the oldest and most celebrated of these romances is entitled Brutus.

Richard. It was a Roman story, I suppose.

Mrs. M. The name would naturally lead you to think so ; but, in fact, it is a fabulous history of the kings of England : and it is from this romance that the histories of king Arthur, and of the enchanter Merlin, are derived, as also many of those fairy tales which still amuse the children of the present day ?

Mary. Then was the romance of Brutus a child's book ?

Mrs. M. By no means, my dear, it was written for the amusement of grave and grown up people. The French have always had a great fondness for fairy tales; and Mother Goose's tales, and many books of that description, are derived from the French.

George. I remember you once read us some pretty little stories in verse, which were something, but not quite, like fairy tales, and you said they were French fables.

Mrs. M. They were fabliaux translated by Mr. Way. A fabliau signifies a short tale in verse. This was a favourite species of writing in France, till it was, in the sixteenth century, succeeded by a sedate, sentimental kind of romance, the great charm of which consisted in a mixture of high-wrought sentiments and impossible incidents, jumbled most solemnly and at the same time most comically together. Amadis de Gaul, so often quoted in Don Quixote, was one of these.

Richard. I had several questions I wanted to ask you yesterday; but we had so many things to talk about, I had not time.

Mrs. M. You had better ask them now, while you remember them.

Richard. In the first place, then, mamma, what was a seneschal?

Mrs. M. He was a sort of lieutenant, appointed by the king to superintend the distribution of justice in the different districts which were

under the jurisdiction of the crown. The name of seneschal more particularly pertains to the southern parts of France. In the north these lieutenants were styled *baillies*, or bailiffs. The appointment of seneschals and baillies tended greatly to weaken the power of the nobles, and to strengthen that of the crown: for the lower orders were thus enabled to appeal from the tyrannical jurisdiction of their feudal chiefs to the sovereign legislation of the king.

Richard. The next thing I wanted to know was, where all the money came from which was paid for the ransom of Saint Louis?

Mrs. M. It was doubtless raised with great difficulty. Amongst other expedients, the silver balustrades which surrounded the tomb of our Richard Cœur de Lion at Rouen were taken down and melted to make up the sum.

George. And, I dare say, Richard, if he could have known what was going forwards, would have thought that they were put to a very good use.

Richard. Pray, mamma, were these silver balustrades coined into money, or were they sent to the Turks all in a lump?

Mrs. M. They probably were sent "all in a lump;" for it was then a common practice to pay large sums by weight, in pieces of uncoined metal. Only a small quantity of money was coined for the convenience of small payments.

Mary. It must have been very troublesome to pay money in those great heavy lumps of silver or gold.

Mrs. M. The silver coinage of the early French kings was so shamefully debased, that most persons probably preferred receiving a payment by weight rather than in coin. The practice of mixing silver and copper seems to have been begun by Philip I., whose silver coin was alloyed by one-third of copper. His example was followed by most of his successors, and the old French coinage was very inferior, in point of real value, to the coinage of England. Most of the pretended silver money which was coined in the private mints in France (many of the nobles had mints of their own) was so bad, that from its colour, which showed the want of good metal, it was called *moneta nigra*, or black money.

Richard. And now, mamma, comes the last question I had to ask you. What was that Greek fire with which the Turks molested the army of Louis?

Mrs. M. It was a kind of inflammable substance which burnt every thing it came near. It was formerly very much employed in all the eastern countries.

Richard. How could the people who used it avoid being burnt by it themselves?

Mrs. M. The art of using and of preparing this Greek fire was kept a great secret, and we

know very little about it. Joinville tells us it was put into barrels, and was sent forth by means of a machine which he calls a petardie, but which he does not describe. He says, that when these barrels were sent off, they looked like dragons of fire flying through the air; and that when the men saw one coming, they threw themselves upon their knees, and gave themselves up for lost.

George. Could they not have run and got out of the way of it?

Mrs. M. When the barrels fell they exploded with a great noise; the fire burst forth, and water would not extinguish it. Vinegar was said to have an effect upon it; but the best method, when that could be adopted, was to smother it with sand.

Richard. Did the people of Europe ever make any of this fire?

Mrs. M. Several of the crusaders learnt, or believed that they had learnt, the art of making it; and antiquaries tell us it was composed of sulphur, bitumen, naphtha, and various kinds of gums: but the only time that I can recollect its being used in Europe to any purpose was once by Philip Augustus, who destroyed the English fleet at Dieppe with some Greek fire which he found at Acre, when he and king Richard took that city, and which he brought with him to France.

Richard. Ah! if poor king Richard could have known that, when he helped to take Acre, he was helping to burn his own fleet!

George. Now that Richard has got to the end of all his questions, there is just one thing I want to say. The little picture you showed us yesterday of the castle of Joinville does not give me at all the idea of a castle, such as I should have supposed these fighting nobles would have lived in.

Mrs. M. As the feudal system declined, the nobles became less of fighters, and their châteaux (for in France every gentleman's house in the country is called a château) became less like fortresses. Still, if you examine this little sketch of the castle of Joinville, you will perceive many traces of the ancient feudal castle. The dwelling of the chief is, you see, placed on the top of the hill, surrounded by a wall, which, although it is apparently intended more for ornament than defence, is a wall nevertheless. Along the slope of the hill is what the artist has doubtless intended for a vineyard; and there, during times of danger, the labourers, while at work, were under the protection of the archers on the walls. At the bottom of all is the town or village where the houses of the serfs stood clustering under the eye and shelter of their liege lord.

George. I should like to see a real old French castle, that I might see what difference there was between the castles in France and those in England.

Mrs. M. If I may venture to judge by the prints which I have seen of the ruins of old castles

in France, I should imagine that the French built their castles with loftier towers and with still more massy walls than the English. In the general plan and disposition of the different parts of the building, they were probably much alike. I find, however, one dissimilarity in the interior arrangements which may be worth noticing. The lord of an English castle always dwelt in the centre tower or keep, the upper part of which was occupied with the state apartments; while in a French castle the keep, or, as they called it, the donjon tower, was the habitation of the four principal officers; and the lord or castellan had a separate house in the outer ballium, which, in an English castle, was the place appropriated for the barracks and stables, &c.

Richard. What, pray, had those four officers to do?

Mrs. M. In a large castle they had a great deal to do. The first was entitled the *guard*, the second the *watch*, the third the *provisioner*, and the fourth the *gate-opener*; and these names, as I suppose you will think, sufficiently explain the nature of their respective offices.

CHAPTER XVI.

PHILIP IV., SURNAMED LE BEL.

[Years after Christ, 1286—1314.]



A Knight Templar.



Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily.

THE happiness and prosperity which France had of late enjoyed was now drawing to a close. The young king, unlike his father and his grandfather, was of a violent and unforgiving temper. He was not deficient in abilities ; but all the powers of his mind were directed to the gratification of his own selfish wishes. He loved money, not so much to

hoard as to squander ; and he never scrupled committing any act, however cruel or unjust, to obtain it. He was extraordinarily handsome ; but the beauty of his person only rendered the deformities of his character the more hideous. Philip's wife, Jane, queen of Navarre, was also of a violent and vindictive temper ; and it was another misfortune of his reign that he had avaricious and insolent men for his ministers. Thus France, in his time, had her full share of misery.

In the early part of his reign Philip was much occupied by the affairs of Aragon, and in endeavours to enforce the claim which his brother pretended to have to that kingdom, in right of the pope's donation. Edward I. of England, whose daughter was married to the king of Aragon, was desirous to maintain peace between Philip and Alphonso ; but all his good offices were ineffectual. He could only obtain the release of Charles the Lamé. Charles the Lamé no sooner recovered his liberty, than he and Charles of Valois joined their forces against Alphonso of Aragon and his brother James ; but after a struggle which kept Europe in a continual ferment for some years, the two Charleses were obliged to give up the contest, and to leave the princes of Aragon in possession of their territories.

In 1293 a private quarrel between a French and an English sailor involved the two nations in a war. The quarrel being taken up by the crews of

their two ships, spread from them to the fleets of both countries, and much piracy and outrage followed. Edward and Philip each demanded a compensation for the damage which his subjects had received, and this each refused to give. Philip summoned Edward as his vassal to appear before the parliament at Paris; and Edward sent his brother, the earl of Cornwall, to negotiate for him. But he, not being a politician, was no match for Philip, who prevailed with him to give up six towns in Guienne, as a mere matter of form, promising to surrender them again. When Philip, however, had once got possession of these towns, he refused to resign them. Edward was extremely angry at this proceeding, renounced his homage to Philip, and refused to acknowledge himself a vassal of France. Philip sent Robert of Artois with an army into Guienne; but little was done, both kings being at this time more occupied with other projects. Edward's favourite project, as you probably remember, was the conquest of Scotland, and that of Philip was the annexing Flanders to his own dominions.

Flanders was at this time in the possession of Guy Dampierre, who had inherited it from his mother, the youngest sister to the countess Jane. He was a brave and venerable man, and was one of those knights who had accompanied Saint Louis to the Holy Land. The Flemings, naturally a fickle people, were easily won over by the bribes and

artifices of Philip to take offence at the measures pursued by their earl, and loudly to express their discontents. Guy, thinking that an alliance with England would strengthen his power at home, offered his daughter Philippa in marriage to Edward, the young prince of Wales. Philip was resolved to prevent this marriage, and took effectual means to do so. He invited the old earl and his wife and daughter, under a show of friendship, to Paris; and when they arrived he caused them all to be shut up in prison. The earl and countess obtained their liberty in about a year; but Philippa was not permitted to accompany them. The king, under the plea that she was his god-daughter, and that he had therefore a right to detain her, kept her a prisoner during the rest of her life, notwithstanding all the earl her father could do, and notwithstanding the united efforts of the pope and the king of England, who tried hard to obtain her liberty.

You may easily believe that Philip's overbearing and ambitious conduct made him many enemies. The king of England, the emperor of Germany, and many of the German princes, joined the earl of Flanders in a league against him. But Philip, by bribes and other means, contrived to counteract this league; and Guy soon saw all his allies fall away, and found that he had to bear the burden of the war alone.

Philip made a truce with Edward in 1297, which was prolonged afterwards from time to time. He

also gave him his sister Margaret in marriage, and his daughter Isabella to the young prince of Wales. These affairs being settled, Philip turned his whole attention towards Flanders, which he seemed determined to overwhelm. He summoned all his vassals; and, that no one might be hindered from obeying the summons, he forbade all trials by combat, all private wars, and all tournaments, till such time as "the king's wars should be ended."

The command of the army was given to Charles, count de Valois, who entered Flanders in 1299, and besieged Ghent, where the earl and his family were. The earl, finding himself thus hardly pressed, determined to go to Paris and plead his cause with the king in person. The count de Valois undertook to conduct him, and promised that if he could not obtain peace within the year, he would bring him back in safety to Ghent. Under the faith of this promise, Guy, with two of his sons, set out; but when he arrived in Paris, Philip protested that he was not bound by the engagement his brother had made, and shut up the old earl and his sons in prison. At this Charles of Valois was so much offended that he quitted the king's service, and went into Italy, and entered into that of the pope.

Philip now believed himself master of Flanders. He placed garrisons in all the towns, and appointed Chatillon governor; and, contrary to all his former promises, he loaded the people with taxes. The Flemings, unaccustomed to such tyranny, resolved

to free themselves from it. They rose up as by one consent, and made a general massacre of the French. On the news of this insurrection Philip sent an army of 50,000 men into Flanders. The Flemings had only raw and undisciplined troops, and were destitute of experienced officers. The French army, on the other hand, consisted of veteran troops, and was commanded by Robert of Artois, the most experienced general of his age. But, as it happened, their apparent want of military skill proved the Flemings' best security: for Robert, despising them, and regarding them as an army of shopkeepers, thought his victory over them so certain that he neglected many necessary precautions. The consequence was, that in a battle, which was fought near Courtray, on the 9th of June, 1302, his troops were completely beaten, and he and his son slain. After the battle the Flemings collected on the field four thousand gilt spurs, of the kind worn only by knights and noblemen, and hung them up in the church at Courtray as a trophy of their victory.

Philip, more exasperated than ever, assembled a larger army than before, and, commanding it in person, entered Flanders in 1304. He gained a great victory at Mons en Puelle; and about the same time his fleet defeated the Flemish fleet. This double disaster reduced the Flemings to desperation, and shutting up all their shops, they assembled in a vast multitude, and marching boldly up

to the French army, which was then besieging Lisle, demanded peace or instant battle.

This prompt and bold proceeding astonished the king, who granted them peace, one of the conditions of which was that their earl should be restored to them. He was accordingly set at liberty, and went back to his country. Returning afterwards to France to complete the treaty with Philip, he died there at the age of eighty. His son, Robert de Bethune, succeeded to the earldom, and the Flemings, who for the present were cured of their love of change, remained tolerably faithful to him.

These wars in Flanders, which I have thus briefly related, occupied several years. During the time they were going on, Philip had been also engaged in an angry war of words with Boniface VIII. This pope was one of the most imperious and haughty men who ever sat in the papal chair; but in Philip he found a temper as haughty and imperious as his own. Their disagreements began as early as the year 1295, when Boniface sent to desire that Philip would make peace with the king of England, on pain of excommunication. On this, Philip sent him word, in return, that it was the business of a pope to exhort, and not to command; and that, for his part, he would allow no one to dictate to him in the government of his kingdom. This bold answer laid the foundation of a lasting enmity between Philip and Boniface. They omitted no opportunity of thwarting and of injuring each other: they

even descended to personal abuse. The pope told the king of France that he was a fool, and the king of France accused the pope of heresy, immorality of conduct, and even of magic. At last Philip took it into his head to have Boniface brought by force to attend a council which was to be held at Lyons. For that purpose he despatched a chosen band of soldiers to Italy, under the command of Nogaret. They found the pope at his native town of Anagnia, in Abruzzo, whither he had gone to avoid the many enemies whom his overbearing temper had raised against him at Rome. Nogaret bribed the people of Anagnia to admit him into the town; and one of the Colonna family (the pope's chief enemies at Rome) found entrance with him. Nogaret proceeded to the pope's palace, and easily became master of his person, and was leading him away prisoner, when Colonna struck the pope a violent blow on the face with his iron gauntlet, which instantly covered him with blood. Boniface uttered loud and violent cries of pain and resentment. His countrymen now repented of having betrayed him into the hands of his enemies. They rose and rescued him, and drove Nogaret and Colonna out of the town.

Boniface did not long survive the affront he had received; it is said that the violence of his ungoverned temper threw him into a fever; and that he died raving mad, having in the paroxysms of his frenzy gnawed off his fingers. His death took

place in 1303 ; he was succeeded by Benedict XI. a mild and peaceable man, who was desirous to heal the breaches that had been caused by the violent conduct of his predecessor. Benedict, however, lived only a few months, and after his death the cardinals found it so very difficult to choose a successor, that the papal see remained vacant more than a year. At last Bertrand de Got was elected pope, and took the name of Clement V. He was a native of Gascony, and consequently a subject of the king of England ; but he was completely won over by Philip to the interests of France, and removed the papal see from Rome to Avignon.

Clement was crowned pope at Lyons, Nov. 14, 1305, in the presence of the king and the chief nobles of France. As the pope was returning from church, the king, who had been leading the pope's horse, resigned his office to the duke of Bretagne, and mounted his own horse. At that moment an old wall, on which a number of persons were standing to view the procession, fell ; the duke of Bretagne was killed on the spot, and many other persons were killed and wounded. The pope himself had a very narrow escape ; he was struck on the head by a stone which knocked off his tiara. The king and his brother, Charles of Valois, also received hurts. This melancholy adventure of the new pope was regarded as a very bad omen by all the superstitious people of the time ; but I do not know that any great disaster followed, except in-

deed the disastrous fate of the knights Templars, whose ruin took place during his popedom. These knights, as you probably recollect, were an order of military monks, which had been established during the early times of the crusades for the protection of the pilgrims who visited the holy sepulchre. They had in the course of time become exceedingly affluent, and had purchased lands in several countries of Europe. They lived dispersed, but were still under the dominion of their grand master, who exercised a despotic control over them.

The Templars in France had taken part with the people in some popular commotions ; and partly on this account, and partly for the sake of getting possession of their riches, Philip had marked them for destruction. He had many secret conferences on this subject with Clement, who used for the sake of greater privacy to meet him in a wood near Avignon. It was concerted between them that Philip, under pretence of holding a consultation with the Templars respecting a new crusade, should summon them to appear at Paris in October 1307. The grand master, James de Molai, was then in Cyprus ; but he and sixty of his knights nevertheless obeyed the summons. As soon as they arrived, they were thrown into prison, and accused of a variety of crimes, of which they were innocent ; but their innocence availed them little ; the pope dissolved their order, and fifty-seven of the knights were condemned and burnt alive. The

grand master, and three of his principal officers, remained in prison. After lingering some years in confinement, they urgently demanded to be brought to trial; and in 1314 were indulged with a sort of mock trial, and de Molai, who could not read, was made to affix his seal to a confession of crimes. He and his companions were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and they were placed on a scaffolding, raised in the front of Notre Dame, to hear their confessions and their sentence read. De Molai exclaimed, with a loud voice, that their confessions were false; that he and his knights had been trepanned into assenting to them; and that they were innocent of the crimes imputed to them. On this the king was violently enraged, and ordered that they should all be burnt to death by a slow fire. The place he appointed for their execution was at the back of the garden wall of his own palace! The knights submitted to the tortures of their lingering death with incredible constancy. It is said that de Molai, while at the stake, summoned the pope in forty days, and the king in four months, to appear before the throne of God to answer for his murder. It is certain that both the pope and the king died nearly within the stated time.

The order of the Templars was everywhere suppressed; but in no country were they treated with so much cruelty as in France. Their possessions were nominally transferred to the order of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem; but the

king and the pope, it is supposed, retained the greater part.

The government of Philip grew every year more oppressive. After he had exhausted the resources of taxes and imposts, he had recourse to debasing his coinage, and at the same time increasing the nominal value of it—an expedient which could only afford him a temporary relief, and was very ruinous to his subjects.

The latter years of his reign were also disgraced by the levity of his sons' wives.

Philip had three sons, Louis, Philip, and Charles. Margaret, the wife of Louis, was punished for her misconduct with great severity. She was imprisoned in Château Gaillard, and it is supposed was privately put to death. Blanch, the wife of Charles, saved her life by declaring her marriage null, by reason of consanguinity, and her punishment was remitted to perpetual confinement in a convent. Jane, the wife of Philip, was probably considered as the least guilty of the three, and was restored to her husband and family, after a year's imprisonment.

In 1314, as Philip was hunting in the forest of Fontainbleau, his horse fell with him, and he was so much hurt, that he died Nov. 4. He was in the forty-sixth year of his age, and the twenty-ninth of his reign.

While on his death-bed, he was touched with a late repentance, and taking pity on his poor op-

pressed people, he besought his son Louis, with his dying breath, to moderate the taxes, to maintain justice and good order, and to coin no base money.

Philip married Jane, queen of Navarre, who died in 1303. He had three sons and two daughters.

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|----------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Louis, | { | who all reigned successively, and |
| Philip, | | died young without heirs male. The |
| Charles, | | crown then went to the son of Charles |
| | | of Valois. |

Margaret, married Ferdinand of Castile, son of Sancho, the usurper.

Isabella, married Edward II., king of England.

During this reign, the dominions of the crown were increased by Champagne and Brie, which was part of the inheritance of the queen of Navarre. Philip also forcibly annexed the city of Lyons to his own territories. That city had formerly belonged to the kingdom of Arles, but latterly had been independent, and was governed by an archbishop.

During the whole of Philip's reign it had been his policy to depress the nobles, and to raise the middle classes of the people. He allowed persons of low birth to purchase fiefs, by the possession of which these persons were elevated to the condition of nobles. He still farther mortified the old nobility, by issuing a patent of nobility in favour of Ralph, his goldsmith. And to raise the condition of the middle classes in general, he allowed the

different communes to send deputies to attend the meetings of the states-general, which till then had been composed only of nobles and prelates.

In 1300, pope Boniface VIII. established a jubilee. This festival was kept with great solemnity, and so many people resorted to Rome to be present at it, that many nobles, not being able to procure lodgings, were obliged to sleep in sheds and hovels, and some even in the streets.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XVI.

Richard. Pray, mamma, what were the states-general? I suppose they were much the same as our parliaments.

Mrs. Markham. They have very frequently the name of parliament given to them; but as there also existed in France, from a very ancient period, other and very different bodies also called parliaments, it is proper and necessary to distinguish between them.

In all the feudal governments, the power of the crown was originally confined within narrow limits. I do not mean that it was confined by any strict law: laws in rude ages are seldom exact; but the feudal chiefs, who held under the king, were in

general so powerful, that the king could seldom do much in opposition to them, and was obliged to be guided very much by their wishes. In France, as I have already told you, a general assembly of the nation was anciently held every spring, at first in the month of March, afterwards in May. The monarch was by the constitution greatly dependent on this assembly, though such a man as Charlemagne probably led it as he pleased. After Charlemagne, when the monarchy was much weakened, and many nobles became more powerful than the crown, those nobles who thought themselves too great to condescend to admit the king's authority in their own domains, cared not to attend this national council, and it accordingly fell gradually into decay.

Philip the Fair, in whose time the crown had gained a very considerable and important ascendancy over the nobles, convened in 1302 what are properly called the states-general. These states were composed in the first place of clergy, who took the precedence; secondly, of nobles; and thirdly, of the deputies of the commons, or *tiers état*, who now, for the first time, were assigned a regular place in this solemn and deliberative public assembly. Subsequent meetings of the states-general were frequent till the year 1614, from which time they were discontinued till 1789, when they were again summoned at the eventful crisis of the revolution.

Richard. And what were the parliaments, as distinct from the states-general?

Mrs. M. The parliament of Paris appears to have emanated from a supreme council, which, under the kings of the house of Capet, was composed of the immediate feudal vassals of the crown, the prelates and officers of the royal household. This was the great judicial tribunal of the French crown. St. Louis made a considerable alteration in its constitution, and it acquired in his time the title of Parliament. Philip the Fair fixed its seat at Paris. The parliaments, in addition to their judicial functions, were employed to register and authenticate all the royal edicts, and assumed a right to remonstrate against them, and in very many cases to delay, and in some absolutely to refuse registration. Charles V. permitted the members of the parliament to fill up vacancies in their body by election; and though this privilege was resumed afterwards by the crown, yet it was restored by Louis XI., who also appointed that they should retain their stations for life. Thus the parliaments acquired great power in the state, and preserved, even through the most despotic reigns, the form and memory of a comparatively free constitution. When the parliaments refused to register the king's edicts, the king was obliged to proceed in person to the place where they held their sittings, and insist on the registering them; and the parlia-

ments could not refuse this to the king in person. The king's seat on these occasions was on a sort of couch under a canopy; and hence we often hear of his holding a bed of justice. Several of the provinces had also separate parliaments. There were parliaments of Toulouse, Rennes, Dijon, Grenoble, and other places.

Mary. I don't see why the French nobles need have been so very angry, when the king made his goldsmith a nobleman.

Mrs. M. They regarded it as a great infringement of the privileges of their order. The French nobles were the proudest people in Europe, and, on account of their descent from the Franks, looked on themselves as a distinct and superior class, possessing rights and dignities which could not be shared by any other. Thus the king, although he might make Ralph the goldsmith a count, could not make him a descendant of the Franks; and therefore, according to the notions entertained by the nobles, the goldsmith could not be a genuine nobleman. I am told that this distinction between the descendants of the original nobility, and those whose families have been ennobled by the royal patents, is still in some degree kept up. These two different classes of nobility are distinguished by the terms of the *nobles* and the *ennobled*.

Richard. I think that was a tolerably peremptory law of Philip's which "forbade all private wars till the king's wars were ended."

Mrs. M. When the king's wars *were* ended, he rode full accoutred into the church of Notre Dame, and returned thanks at the altar for his victory over the Flemings.

Mary. Do you mean, mamma, that he really rode on horseback into the church?

Mrs. M. He really did, and an equestrian statue was afterwards placed in the church, an exact representation of him and his horse.

George. Pray, mamma, is that kind of high cap which popes are always drawn with called a tiara?

Mrs. M. Yes, my dear; and if you will examine one of these tiaras, you will observe that it is formed of three crowns, one above another.

Richard. I should have thought one crown was enough to wear at a time.

Mrs. M. Boniface VIII. surrounded the tiara with its first crown; Benedict XII. assumed the second; and John XXIII. added the third. The practice has been followed by all succeeding popes.

Mary. Will you tell us, if you please, mamma, how the ladies in France used to dress at this time?

Mrs. M. The female dress was at this time very graceful. It consisted of a tight bodice, made very high, and fitting the shape, over which was an open robe, trimmed either with gold or fur. The breadth and richness of the trimming depended on the rank of the wearer; for the laws were very strict in France by which these things were regulated.

George. And pray, mamma, how were the men dressed?

Mrs. M. Persons of distinction had long tunics with cloaks over them. Short tunics, or jackets, were worn only by servants, excepting in a camp, and then they might be worn by gentlemen. The same laws which regulated the trimmings of the ladies regulated also the cloaks of the gentlemen, whose capes were cut, not "according to their cloth," but according to their rank. All ranks wore hoods, called *chaperons*, the size and shape of which were under strict regulation. The nobles had them very large, and let them hang down the back; and those of the common people were smaller, and shaped like a sugar-loaf, and were worn really to cover their heads.

Mary. I think those laws about capes and trimmings must have been very foolish and troublesome.

Mrs. M. Laws of this nature are called sumptuary laws. Philip IV. enacted a great number of them; he not only regulated the expense of each dress, but also the number of dresses each person was to have.

Richard. That was the most provoking of all.

Mrs. M. I can tell you of another law, which you will perhaps think still more provoking. There was a law regulating the number of dishes which each person might have for dinner and supper.

Richard. O! I don't think I should have

mind about that, provided the dishes were not stinted in size as well as in number.

Mrs. M. No person was to have more than one dish of soup and two dishes of meat for dinner, and the same for supper.

George. I think that was a very fair allowance for supper.

Mrs. M. You must recollect that they dined at the very early hour of half-past eleven; they therefore required a more solid supper than we do. The usual supper-hour was between four and five in the afternoon.

Mary. If we had such laws about dinners and suppers in England, I suspect they would not be very well kept.

Mrs. M. To say the truth, the strictness of the law forbidding many dishes was sometimes evaded by putting different sorts of meat into the same dish; but the good folks of France were not long allowed to enjoy the benefit of this ingenious contrivance, for the king afterwards made a law forbidding it.

George. I don't wonder the country was so full of discontents. I think the old saying, of having "a finger in the pie," must have come from that over-meddling of king Philip.

Mrs. M. The French were always a comparatively abstemious people, and perhaps did not think these restrictions on their meals so very serious a grievance as you seem to do. They were always

much fonder of show than of comfort ; and even so long ago as Philip le Bel's reign, the inferior gentry, who were generally very poor, would try to hide their poverty by external finery. The English, on the contrary, preferred good living to show. The English yeomanry of this period are said to have lived in mean houses, but to have kept plentiful tables. In one respect, however, their houses were better than those of the French ; for the houses in England had the luxury of chimneys long before they were known in France.

George. I was always sure that in all material things the English were much cleverer than the French.

Mrs. M. The English perhaps might be cleverer in regard to chimneys, but the French beat them in glass windows. The English were obliged to have French artificers to make all the glass windows in their older churches. Most of the finest painted glass in our cathedrals came from France. Glass was at first chiefly, if not solely, employed in both countries for religious buildings. It was not used in France in domestic architecture till the fourteenth century.

When we are speaking of the laws made by Philip to restrict his subjects' dinners, I ought to have told you of a very singular custom which at this time prevailed in France.

Mary. What was it, mamma ?

Mrs. M. It was a custom for people to eat off

each other's plates, and this was thought so great a mark of politeness, that if a gentleman sat next a lady at table, he would have been thought very rude if he did not eat off her plate.

George. One would almost think that the poor dear souls were stinted in plates as well as in dishes.

Richard. Pray, mamma, shall we have the history of any more crusades?

Mrs. M. We have now come to the end of the crusades; for though several of the succeeding popes tried to excite another, the princes of Europe were at length become too wise, and the crusade which was undertaken by Saint Louis and our Edward I. proved the last.

George. What became of all the Latins in Palestine?

Mrs. M. Their power dwindled away, till of all their possessions in the east, the town of Acre alone remained to them. But although their power was gone, their pride and their ambition remained. Acre was taken by the Turks in 1291; and even while the Turks were storming their town, the Latins were occupied in contentions for the title of king. Some of the knights escaped, and afterwards possessed themselves of the island of Rhodes; the rest were massacred by the Turks; and thus closes the history of the dominion of the Latins in Syria.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOUIS X., SURNAMED HUTIN.

PHILIP V., SURNAMED LE LONG.

CHARLES IV., SURNAMED LE BEL.

[Years after Christ, 1314—1328.]



Huntsman and valet to Philip le Bel (from their tombs).

THESE three brothers reigned one after the other in rapid succession, and all died in the prime of life, leaving no male heirs. As these reigns are very short, I have thought it best to place them in one chapter.

To begin then with Louis, surnamed Hutin,

which some English historians translate "the Quarrelsome," and others "the Peevish." Too little is known of this king's temper and character to enable us to say how far he deserved either of these opprobrious epithets; but, judging by his conduct during the short time he reigned, we may reasonably believe that he was very covetous, and of a restless, unsettled humour.

He was twenty-six years of age when he began to reign. At first he allowed his uncle, Charles of Valois, to take the chief direction of affairs. Charles's first act was to compass the ruin of Enguerrand de Marigny, the late king's minister. He caused him to be accused of theft, and to be condemned and executed without having been permitted to speak in his own defence. The wife of de Marigny was also accused of conspiring to compass the king's death by magic, and was thrown into prison.

After the lapse of many years, Charles of Valois became convinced of his injustice towards de Marigny, and repented bitterly of it. He at length endeavoured also to make some reparation, the only reparation indeed which it was in his power to make. He restored all the forfeited estates of Marigny to his children, and caused his body to be taken down from the gibbet where it had continued to hang, and to be honourably interred. This took place in the year 1325. I must now return to the beginning of the reign of Louis Hutin.

Hostilities having again broke out between France and the Flemings, Louis was desirous of marching into Flanders; but before he could do this, he found it necessary to replenish his coffers, which his father had left empty.

Amongst other means of raising money, he issued a proclamation, offering to enfranchise all the serfs in the royal domains on their paying a certain sum. But the greater part of them preferred their money to their freedom. Louis then hit on the singular expedient of forcing them to be free, whether they would or not, by making a law to *oblige* them to purchase their enfranchisement.

Having at last collected an army, he laid siege to Courtray; but the elements conspired against him. Such torrents of rain fell that the roads were rendered impassable, and it was scarcely possible, even in the camp, to get from tent to tent without sinking up to the knees in mud. Provisions also began to fail, and the king was obliged to raise the siege and return to France; but he first burnt all his baggage, which, on account of the state of the roads, he could not remove, to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy.

In the following year Louis died suddenly. His death was at the time ascribed to poison; but we may with much more reason attribute it to the effects of his own imprudence in drinking cold water after he had heated himself with playing at tennis in the Bois de Vincennes, and then sitting down

to rest himself in a damp grotto. He was seized soon afterwards with a sudden chill, and died the next day. He was twenty-eight years old, and had reigned only nineteen months. He was twice married. By his first wife, Margaret, daughter of the duke of Burgundy, who died in prison, he had one daughter,—

Jane, queen of Navarre, who married the count d'Evreux.

Louis married, secondly, Clemence of Anjou, daughter of Charles Martel, king of Hungary. By her he had a posthumous child,—

John, who lived only eight days.

When the king's death was known, a regency was appointed; and on the death of the infant, Philip, the late king's next brother, ascended the throne, to the exclusion, according to the Salic law, of his daughter. Jane, however, was still heiress of the kingdom of Navarre, which had descended to her father from his mother, the queen of Navarre.

The duke of Burgundy and the count d'Evreux seemed at first determined to support the claims of Jane to the crown of France; but the parliament having confirmed the law excluding females, and taken an oath to maintain Philip on the throne, all opposition was withdrawn; and Philip secured the duke of Burgundy to his interests by giving him *his* daughter Jane in marriage. The young queen of Navarre was married to the count d'Evreux's

eldest son, who by that means became king of Navarre.

Philip reigned about six years; the whole of which time proved, from different causes, a period of turbulence and disquietude. The king, we are told, was a man of good abilities, and desirous to remedy the disorders in the state; but the seeds of evil were so deeply sown, and a lamentable corruption of morals prevailed so generally, that his best endeavours availed but little.

We are told that the crime of poisoning was at this time common in France.

Philip made an attempt to reduce all the weights and measures throughout his kingdom to one general standard; but he did not live to effect this beneficial regulation. He died of a lingering illness, at the château de Vincennes, January 3, 1322, in the twenty-ninth year of his age. He married Jane, daughter and heiress of the count of Burgundy, and of Mahaud, countess of Artois, and by her had one son and four daughters:

Louis, who died in his infancy.

Jane, married Eudes IV., duke of Burgundy.

Margaret, married Louis, earl of Flanders.

Isabella, married the dauphin of Vienne.

Blanch, a nun.

The same law which had excluded the daughter of Louis Hutin from the throne now excluded the daughters of Philip le Long; and his brother

Charles, surnamed le Bel, ascended the throne without opposition.

Money transactions in France (as also in England) were at this time chiefly carried on by natives of Lombardy. These people acquired prodigious wealth, and it was one of the first acts of Charles's reign to seize on their effects, and drive them all out of his kingdom.

England was at this time in a state of great anarchy. Edward I., who had ruled with a powerful hand, was dead, and was succeeded by Edward II., a weak prince, who suffered himself to be governed by his favourites. He had married Isabella, Charles's sister; and on a revival of the old claim of doing homage for Guienne, Edward sent his queen to France to accommodate this affair with her brother. Charles agreed to excuse Edward from appearing personally, and to receive the homage of the young prince of Wales instead. Isabella, when she had got her son with her in Paris, was in no hurry to return to England. She collected about her several English exiles, and some nobles who had left their country in disgust. She made Edmund Mortimer her favourite and confidant, and, planning to overthrow the weak, infatuated Edward, solicited aid of her brother for that purpose. But Charles entirely disapproved of her conduct, and not only refused to give her any assistance, but desired her to quit France. I

need not here say how Isabella went on, nor relate to you the imprisonment and death of her husband.

About this time Flanders was in a very unsettled state. I have already told you that the Flemings were a turbulent and changeable people. They were rich, and aspired at independence, which caused a perpetual struggle between them and their rulers. In the course of a few years they often changed masters, and the peace between France and Flanders was, during the same period of time, often broken and renewed.

In 1325 died Charles of Valois. It has been said of him, as of our own John of Gaunt, that he was the son, the brother, the uncle, and the father of kings, but was never a king himself. His disorder, which I have already said was of the mind, occasioned by remorse, completely baffled his physicians, "who could not minister to a mind diseased." It was therefore attributed to magic, which was at that time the convenient way of accounting for every unknown disorder.

On Christmas eve, 1327, the king was seized with a violent illness, which in a few weeks terminated his life. He died in the thirty-third year of his age and fifth of his reign. He was married three times : first, to Blanch of Burgundy, whom he divorced ; secondly, to Mary of Luxemburg, sister to Henry VII., emperor of Germany ; and lastly, to Jane d'Evreux, by whom he had two daughters :

Mary, who died young, a few years after her father ;

Blanch, a posthumous child, married Philip, son of Philip of Valois.

As Blanch was not born till some months after the king's death, a regency was appointed ; but when the expected child proved a daughter, Philip of Valois, the late king's cousin, assumed the crown, as being the nearest male heir.

TABLE I. OF THE FAMILY OF CAPET.

Began to
reign.

| | | |
|------|---|-----------------------------|
| 987 | Hugh Capet. | |
| 996 | Robert. | |
| 1031 | Henry I. | |
| 1060 | Philip I. | |
| 1106 | Louis VI., le Gros. | |
| 1137 | Louis VII., le Jeune. | |
| 1180 | Philip II., Augustus. | |
| 1223 | Louis VIII., le Lion. | |
| 1226 | Louis IX., le Saint. | |
| 1270 | Philip III., le Hardi. | |
| 1286 | Philip IV., le Bel, also king of Navarre. | |
| 1314 | Louis X., Hutin, also king of Navarre, | } sons of Philip le Bel. |
| 1316 | Philip V., le Long, | |
| 1322 | Charles IV., le Bel, | |

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XVII.

Richard. In what way was it pretended that the wife of Marigny tried to take away the king's life by magic ?

Mrs. Markham. She was accused of having made a waxen image of the king, which she placed in a gentle heat so that it would melt gradually ; and it was supposed that by means of her magical incantations the king would waste away by degrees as the image melted, and that when the last atom of wax dissolved he would expire.

Richard. The belief in magic was a fine thing for the physicians ; it must have saved them a great deal of trouble in studying the nature of disorders. :

Mrs. M. I omitted to mention amongst the events of the last reign, that the Jews had to endure a more severe persecution than they had ever before experienced. The pretext was that they had entered into a plot with the Turks to destroy all the people of France, by poisoning the springs of water.

Richard. They must have been very clever Jews to have managed that.

Mrs. M. The lepers also were implicated in the charge, and were accused of endeavouring to spread their loathsome disease. Consequently their hospitals or lazar houses were stripped and pillaged.

As for the Jews, they were deprived of all their possessions, and then banished from France.

George. This is very like the story of the Jews in England. It would have been much more honest if king Philip of France, and our king John, had said to the Jews at once, "We want your money, and we *will* have it," instead of calumniating them as well as robbing them.

Mrs. M. It would have been more honest still, if they had left the Jews in peaceable possession of their property.

Richard. I have been looking at the map of Paris, and I see there are other islands in the Seine besides the one we used to call "*the little old island*."

Mrs. M. There were formerly more than there are now, for by means of bridges and quays, some of those have been joined that lie nearest together. The one you see, named l'isle Louviers, was formerly covered with a grove of elms, and is now occupied as a timber and wood yard. The isle of Saint Louis was formerly a bleaching-ground, and was the place where the Parisians celebrated festive games. It is now joined to the isle Notre Dame, and they form together one island, which is covered with buildings.

Mary. Does the king still inhabit the palace in the *old island*?

Mrs. M. Louis Hutin was the last monarch who resided in that palace. He gave it up to the

use of the public : the courts of justice are held in it ; and it goes by the name of le Palais de Justice.

Mary. Then where does the king of France live when he comes to Paris ?

Mrs. M. The palace of the Tuilleries, which was built in 1564 by Catherine de Medicis, is the present habitation of the royal family. From the time of Louis Hutin till the Tuilleries were built, the Louvre was, I believe, the favourite residence of the French kings.

George. I remember you told us, that in old times, when the king came to Paris, the citizens were obliged to send their furniture to the palace. I hope, when he went away, they got all their things again.

Mrs. M. I hope they did. There is still extant a very curious letter from Philip Augustus, desiring that the old straw, with which the floors of the palace were strewed, may be given for the good of his soul to the use of the poor in the Maison de Dieu.

Richard. What was the Maison de Dieu ? and what use could be made of the old, dirty straw ?

Mrs. M. The Maison de Dieu was an hospital for the sick, and the straw was probably used for the poor creatures to lie upon ; and I dare say it was very thankfully received, for the hospital was, at that time, so ill supplied with beds, that a statute was made, exacting, that on the death of every

canon of Notre Dame, his bed should go to the hospital.

Mary. Then I hope in time they had plenty of beds, and comfortable ones too.

Mrs. M. They had indeed plenty of beds at last, but I fear not very comfortable ones; for, owing to the great increase in the size of Paris, the numbers of sick persons who were sent to this hospital were so great, that the rooms were crowded to excess. Beds were placed one above another, and those at the top could only be reached by the help of ladders; and even in these wretched, close, suffocating beds, the sick were huddled, five and six together—persons with all disorders, and even the dying with the dead. At last the state of the hospital was such, that to send a patient there was almost sending him to certain death.

Mary. Poor creatures! it would have been better for them to have staid and died quietly at home.

Mrs. M. In the reign of Louis XVI. an inquiry was made into the state of this hospital, and the king was arranging a plan for some additional buildings, when the tumult of the revolution put an end to his benevolent designs.

George. This is another reason for disliking that horrible French revolution.

Mrs. M. Happily for the poor wretches in the Maison de Dieu, the revolution was productive of

benefit to them; for when the religious orders were abolished, some of the convents were appropriated to the use of the hospital, and the sick are now (whether or no by fair means, I do not say) comfortably lodged, and the different classes of patients are kept separate.

Richard. You once told us something about the Bois de Vincennes, and I have quite forgot what it was.

Mrs. M. I told you that it was a park close to Paris, and that it was inclosed by Philip Augustus. He built a hunting palace in the park. Our king Henry V. resided in it when he was master of Paris, and died there.

Richard. Is there a palace there now?

Mrs. M. There is a château, which has been greatly enlarged and beautified since those times. It was a favourite residence of many of the French kings till the time of Louis XI. He was, as you will hear when we come to his reign, a very wicked man, and his cruelties converted the château de Vincennes from a *maison de plaisance* into a *maison de misere*, and after his time it was used as a state prison, a few apartments being alone reserved for the occasional accommodation of the royal family.

Mary. It was a strange, uncomfortable plan, to make prisons and palaces all in one.

Mrs. M. The donjon tower of Vincennes, which is the oldest part of the building, contained several dungeons, some of which had no daylight what-

ever; and the stone beds which the prisoners lay on may still be seen.

Mary. I hope no prisoners are ever confined there now.

Mrs. M. During the time of Bonaparte it contained several prisoners; but now the donjon tower is used as a dépôt for gunpowder, and the rest of the palace is converted into a manufactory for porcelain. The most interesting thing to me at Vincennes would be the old oak, which is still standing, under which Saint Louis used to sit to hear the petitions of the poor.

Richard. Pray, mamma, will you be so kind as to explain what sort of thing the jubilee was which pope Boniface ordered to be celebrated once every hundred years?

Mrs. M. It was a plenary indulgence, or in other words, it was a full pardon of sins to all persons who should in this appointed year make a pilgrimage to Rome. The concourse of pilgrims to the first jubilee was so great, that it was called the *golden year*. The period was afterwards shortened to fifty years by pope Clement VI., who lived in 1350, and who was willing to come in for one of these golden harvests. Later popes have, for the same reason, found it convenient to shorten the period to twenty-five years; giving as a reason, that, by this change, every person may reasonably hope to enjoy the benefit of the jubilee at least once in their lives.

George. Are there any jubilees at Rome now?

Mrs. M. One was celebrated in 1825, but it was a great falling off from the jubilees of old times, being attended by only seventy-two pilgrims.

Mary. And what did they do when they got to Rome?

Mrs. M. They received their plenary indulgencies from the pope, Leo XII., and afterwards went in procession to hear mass in St. Peter's church. When they returned they dined in one of the halls of the Vatican with his holiness, who helped them with his own hands, and dined with them at the same table.

George. That would be a very comfortable way of getting absolved of all our sins, if we could but make our consciences keep quiet.

Mrs. M. In former days, when people were very ignorant, and consequently very superstitious, there were various *comfortable* ways of getting absolution for sin. Some people, who were rich and could afford it, allowed their confessors an annual stipend to absolve them from all their sins for the year.

Richard. I should like to know whether these stipends were paid beforehand.

Mrs. M. Some people, instead of buying absolution by the year, thought it better to try the efficacy of a rod, and used to undergo regular cas-

tigations from the hands of their confessors. Saint Louis, who followed very rigorously the superstitious observances of his times, always kept a rod by him, and used to apply it to his own person as occasion offered, or as he thought he deserved it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PHILIP VI. OF VALOIS, SURNAMED LE BIEN FORTUNÉ.

[Years after Christ, 1328—1350.]



JOHN DE MONTFORD
and his Countess.

CHARLES DE BLOIS.

I HAVE already told you in the last chapter, that on the death of Charles le Bel, his cousin Philip, count of Valois, was appointed regent. When the queen-dowager's expected child proved a daughter, he was declared king by the peers and by the states-

general. Philip was crowned at Rheims, in the 35th year of his age; and from the circumstance of his thus obtaining a crown was called *le Bien Fortuné*. But few monarchs, as you will see in the sequel, have less merited that epithet. He was impetuous, rash, selfish, and of a suspicious temper. He was, however, a man of great personal bravery, and this appears to have been his only merit.

Edward III. of England, whose mother, you know, was daughter of Philip le Bel, pretended to claim through her a right to the crown of France, contending that although, according to the Salic law, a woman could not inherit the crown, she might yet transmit a right to it to her son.

He, however, dissembled for a time his ambitious designs, and appeared to acquiesce in Philip's claim by doing homage to him for Guienne. But still he never lost sight of this his favourite project, and long before he could execute it began secretly to lay his measures. He collected a great quantity of warlike stores, and formed alliances with John de Montford, duke of Bretagne, and with the Flemings. Both the Flemings and de Montford were at that time at war with France, Philip having espoused the cause of the earl of Flanders, against whom his subjects had rebelled, and also that of Charles de Blois, who had married the daughter of an elder brother of de Montford, and disputed with him the possession of the duchy of Bretagne.

In 1336 Edward openly set himself to prosecute his claim to the French crown. He prevailed on his allies, the Flemings, to proclaim him king of France, and swear fealty to him. On this occasion also he assumed the arms of France, three fleurs-de-lis, and quartered them with the arms of England on his seal and shield. They continued to form part of the royal arms of England till the folly of assuming them was at length abandoned in the reign of George III.

Philip assembled a great fleet, which sailed up and down the channel and did great mischief to the English commerce. It was encountered by the English fleet off Sluys, and a desperate battle was fought, in which the French were defeated.

In 1342 a truce was agreed upon between the two kings, and Philip proclaimed a tournament at Paris, with the hope of drawing there several Breton noblemen, whom he suspected of favouring the cause of Edward. When he had succeeded in getting them into his power he caused them to be beheaded, without either trial or sentence—an act of injustice and wickedness, of which, during the remainder of his life, he had ample reason to repent. “In this manner,” says Mezerai, “did this too severe and revengeful king alienate the affections of his nobles, who, in consequence, served him but ill in his hour of need.”

Edward, regarding the death of the Breton nobles as an infraction of the truce, immediately renewed

the war. He sent the earl of Derby to attack the dominions of Philip on the side of Guienne, while he himself landed on the coast of Normandy with about 40,000 men. Meeting with no opposition, he marched through the country almost to the gates of Paris, destroying and pillaging everywhere by the way.

Edward's army was not sufficiently numerous to allow him to penetrate far into France for any considerable length of time, and he soon retired towards Ponthieu with the intention of joining the Flemings, having first defied Philip to single combat. This defiance, however, Philip did not accept. Having summoned all the vassals of his kingdom, and assembled a numerous army, he pursued Edward with all haste, burning with resentment towards that audacious monarch, who had thus braved him even at the walls of his capital. When he arrived near the mouth of the Somme, he learned that the English were encamped on the plain of Cressy.

Philip was so impatient to be revenged on the English, that he was with difficulty prevailed on to give his wearied soldiers a night's rest at Abbeville. His army was so numerous that he could with ease have surrounded the English camp and starved it into a surrender; but he rejected with disdain the advice given him that he should do so, and the next morning, the 23rd of August, 1346, he sounded his trumpets and set forwards to battle. Abbeville is five miles from Cressy, and Philip

urged on his troops with such inconvenient speed, that when they arrived in sight of the enemy they were heated, out of breath, and in disorder; whilst the English were seated on the ground in order of battle, tranquilly waiting their approach. At sight of the French army, the English sprang up and made ready their arms.

When Philip saw this formidable and prepared phalanx, he gave orders that the horsemen should halt, and that the archers, who were Genoese, should advance to the front. But there was no discipline or subordination. The horsemen would not obey the order; and the king's brother, the duke of Alençon, declared the Genoese unworthy to have the post of honour. The offended Genoese would not relinquish their ground, and forgetting that they were in the face of the enemy, they and the horsemen began to fight with one another. During their contention a violent shower of rain fell. The English, cool and collected, put their bows into their cases; but the Genoese were too much disordered to take that precaution. The consequence was, that when order was restored and the archers were commanded to commence the attack, their bow-strings were spoiled by the rain, and the arrows fell short of their mark. The duke of Alençon observing this, and being inflamed with passion, believed it to be done with design; and calling out "Treason! treason!" commanded his

men to ride over the Genoese, and drive them off the field.

The rout being thus begun by themselves, there was an end of all order and command in the French army. Each man pressing forwards, they overset one another ; and those who were down could not rise because of the press. The English, meanwhile, stood firmly together, and discharged such thick and steady flights of arrows, that they made a dreadful havock. The battle began at four in the afternoon, and raged till ten at night, when 40,000 French were left dead upon the field. Amongst them was the king of Bohemia, who, though blind, had still desired to be conducted into the battle, that he might "strike one stroke against the enemy." He was led by two of his nobles, who, tying the reins of his horse's bridle to the bridles of their own, galloped with him between them into the midst of the combat. Their three bodies were found with their horses tied together, and a small stone cross still marks the spot where they fell.

Philip, although he saw the battle was lost, would not quit the field till he was forced from it by his attendants, and then, riding under cover of the darkness, he reached the walls of a neighbouring town, and demanded to have the gates opened to him. The governor refused to admit him till he knew who he was, not imagining it could be the

king, who was arrived like a fugitive; but when Philip replied, that "he was the fortunes of France," the gates were immediately opened to him. But he could scarcely make his way through the numbers of people who came flocking about him, weeping and bewailing in so distressful a manner, that he was obliged to try to console them as best he could.

The next day the English continued the pursuit of their flying enemy, and it is said that the slaughter exceeded that of the preceding day. Edward's next enterprise was to besiege Calais, which was at last reduced by famine, and surrendered August 31, 1347, after a siege of eleven months. Edward turned out all the inhabitants, and peopled the town with his own subjects. Philip recompensed the brave citizens as well as he could, for the fortitude and loyalty they had displayed during the siege.

Soon after this, a dreadful pestilence, which equally desolated both England and France, made the two monarchs desirous of peace. Edward, however, retained Calais, as well as several places which the earl of Derby had gained in Guienne.

In 1350, Philip was seized with a violent illness, which soon terminated his life, in the 57th year of his age and the 23rd of his reign. He was twice married: by his first wife, Jane of Burgundy, he had two sons and a daughter:

John, duke of Normandy, who succeeded his father;

Philip, duke of Orleans ;
Mary, duchess of Brabant.

Philip's second wife was Blanch, grand-daughter of Louis X. of Navarre : by her he had Jane, who was a posthumous child.

In the latter end of this reign, the dauphin of Vienne having caused the death of his only child by letting him fall out of a window, was so inconsolable for his misfortune, that he retired from the world into a monastery, and sold his territories to Philip, on condition that the eldest son of the kings of France should, in future, bear the title of dauphin.

Philip purchased Roussillon and Cerdagne, with the town of Montpellier, of the king of Aragon. He inherited Maine and Anjou from his mother, who was a daughter of Charles the Lame, king of Naples. The dominions of the crown of France acquired thus an extension which compensated for its losses in the wars with England.

The people during this reign were greatly distressed by imposts and taxes, more particularly by a tax called *Gabelle*, the levying of which occasioned great discontents.

The province of Bretagne was in a very disturbed state during the greater part of this reign. John de Montfort fell into the hands of the king, who imprisoned him in the Louvre. During his imprisonment, his wife, Margaret of Flanders, a woman

of a masculine spirit, took upon herself the direction of affairs. She sent her young son for safety to England; and clothing herself in armour, and mounting a war-horse, she was, as Froissart says, "as good as a man." She was, nevertheless, driven from all her strong holds, excepting the little town of Hennebon, where she shut herself up, and awaited succours from England. The succours, though promised, were long in coming, and the countess began to despair; but before she could determine to surrender, she mounted a high tower, and took *one* more look at the sea. There she saw some distant sails, which proved to be those of a fleet from England, under the command of Sir Walter Manny, who, landing with his troops, beat off the enemy, and delivered the countess from peril. She met sir Walter as he entered the town, and (I use the words of the chronicle) "kissed him and his captains, like a brave and valiant lady as she was."

After several truces and renewals of war between the parties of De Montfort and Blois, the former died in 1345; and the latter was, in 1347, taken prisoner, with his two sons. His wife, who was both courageous and ambitious, collected the scattered forces of her friends, and supported her husband's party against the countess de Montfort. But although thus the war was still carried on between these two female warriors, nothing decisive was done.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XVIII.

Richard. What kind of tax was the Gabelle?

Mrs. Markham. The mere word itself signifies any kind of tax or rent, but in the French history it commonly means a tax on salt, which was the more oppressive, because it became at last a monopoly.

Richard. How was it made a monopoly?

Mrs. M. All the salt that was made in France was brought to the royal warehouses, and was from thence sold to the people at whatever price the king and his ministers chose to fix ; and as salt may be considered one of the necessities of life, this tax was felt by every description of persons.

George. I don't call that so much a tax as a cheat.

Richard. And did all the kings of France keep on selling salt?

Mrs. M. In all the latter reigns the Gabelle, as well as all the other taxes in France, was farmed.

Mary. Farm a tax! mamma; that is very puzzling.

Mrs. M. To farm a tax is to pay so much to the king for the privilege of receiving all the money collected by it. I believe the French farmers of taxes made very good bargains; for they commonly became very rich, and, in consequence, were very

obnoxious to the poor, who looked upon their wealth as taken from their own pockets.

Richard. But was not some of it taken from the pockets of the rich?

Mrs. M. Not from those of the nobles; for they were exempted from taxation, which made it fall doubly heavy upon the lower orders. I must not forget to tell you a witticism which is recorded of our king Edward III. You know that *sal* is Latin for salt, and when he heard that Philip had levied a tax on salt, he called him the inventor of the *Salic* law.

George. I suppose that dreadful pestilence you just now mentioned was the same you spoke of in your other history, and which I remember you said was called the *black death*.

Mrs. M. You are quite right. This dreadful disorder first made its appearance in the year 1346, in the kingdom of Cathay, the ancient name of China. By degrees it spread all over the then known world, visiting first Constantinople, Egypt, and Greece. From thence it passed over into Europe and travelled northward, till, in 1348, it reached France.

Mary. And did the people of one country begin to be ill as soon as those of another got well; or were they all ill together?

Mrs. M. The disorder seemed to quit one country as soon as it reached another, and to make a very regular progress. It commonly lasted about

five months in each. The people in general, believing that all medicines were vain, took no precautions, either to abate its violence or to prevent infection.

George. Then how was it ever stopt?

Mrs. M. It only stopt on the borders of the Frozen Sea. In Russia it carried off the whole of the royal family. There is one circumstance relative to this black death so very extraordinary, that I cannot forbear relating it, although it has nothing to do with the history of France. You know that, a great many centuries ago, a colony from Denmark inhabited a part of the coast of West Greenland. They built houses and churches, and even had a bishop. The country was, however, very unproductive, and the colony was annually supplied with necessaries from Denmark. But in the year 1349 the pestilence caused so great a mortality amongst the Danish seamen, that none survived who were acquainted with the navigation to West Greenland. The colony was therefore deprived of its usual resources.

Mary. What became of the poor creatures?

Mrs. M. No one knows. West Greenland, ever since that time, has never been visited by Europeans. We are even ignorant whether or not there are any existing descendants of the Danish settlers.

George. Why don't some of our sailors go and see? there is no black death now to prevent them.

Mrs. M. But there are now as great difficulties to overcome. An insurmountable barrier of ice has formed along the coast, which prevents all access to it. Many attempts have at different times been made to reach the ancient settlement. In the reign of queen Elizabeth, our famous navigator, Frobisher, was sent with a squadron for that purpose, but all in vain; neither he, nor any subsequent navigator, has been able to approach the shore, and our sailors can only see, or fancy they see, beyond the barrier of impassable ice, a long line of coast, on which they think they can perceive something like the ruins of buildings.

George. If I were they, I would go to the other side, to East Greenland, and would get to the western shores over land.

Mrs. M. That also has been attempted. A king of Denmark, in the early part of the last century, sent out an expedition, provided with horses and sledges, to explore the country between the two shores; but when the expedition got a short way into the interior, they found that the country, as far as could be seen, presented nothing but an immense plain of ice, intersected by impassable chasms, and that it was utterly impossible to proceed.

George. O! if I had but wings, you should soon know what was become of those Danes in West Greenland. But this is talking nonsense; so, if you please, mamma, we had best go back to France.

Richard. Pray, mamma, are the French well off in histories of their own country?

Mrs. M. They have, I believe, a great many more than my limited information can tell you of. I believe that one of the best is that by Velly, with a continuation by Villaret. I have been entertained exceedingly by a history, not yet completed, written by M. Sismondi, a very distinguished living author. I confess also I have a great liking for old Mezerai, a very *naïf* and honest-hearted historian, and who has the merit with me of not being too philosophical.

Richard. And when did this unphilosophical old gentleman live?

Mrs. M. He lived in the time of Louis XIV., and many whimsical anecdotes are related of him. It was one of his fancies always to sit by candlelight even in the lightest and brightest days in summer. He also loved singularity in his dress, and often wore very shabby clothes. Once, when he was travelling, his carriage broke down; he left his servants to get it repaired, and walked on alone to the nearest town. Here his dress exciting observation, he was about to be taken up as a vagrant. He was highly diverted at the mistake, and only very civilly requested of the people who were going to take him before the magistrate, that they would be so obliging as to wait till his equipage should arrive.

George. I think they would take him for a madman.

Mrs. M. Luckily the arrival of the carriage finished the adventure.

Richard. Have you not a history of France also by a M. Henault ?

Mrs. M. Henault was president of the chamber of requests in Paris, and during a long life enjoyed the highest reputation for virtue and wisdom. He was forty years in writing his short chronological abridgment of French history.

George. It must be owned that the good man did not hurry himself.

Mrs. M. He verified the old saying of "slow and sure ;" and though his history, if we may call it so, is not lively, it may yet be relied on for its accuracy. That is more than can be said for a history by Father Daniel, which is said to contain ten thousand blunders.

Richard. I think it must have required some patience to count them.

Mrs. M. When Daniel was writing his history, the king's librarian sent him a great mass of valuable records and royal letters, thinking that they would be useful to him ; but he sent them all back, saying that he had not patience to look over them, and that he was sure he could make a very readable history without plaguing himself with such paper rubbish.

Mary. Ah, mamma ! if you could get some of that paper rubbish, how many entertaining, and I dare say curious, stories you would find for us !

Mrs. M. I have no doubt but that I shall still be able to find for you many entertaining stories. French literature is singularly rich in private memoirs, which often give us more insight than graver histories into the manners, customs, and ways of thinking, in the different periods in which they are written.

Richard. I don't think there is any thing more curious in history than the change of opinion. One should think that right and wrong must be always the same, and yet how differently people think of it!

Mrs. M. The change of opinion may generally be traced to the progress of knowledge; the more the human understanding is cultivated, the more it will be enlarged, and the better able to discern good from evil.



A crossbow-man, from an old picture of the battle of Cressy.

CHAPTER XIX

JOHN, SURNAMED LE BON.

[Years after Christ, 1350—1364.]



KING JOHN.

THE EARL OF ALENÇON,
killed at Cressy.

JOHN, who was forty years of age when he ascended the throne, had already had great experience in military affairs, and had on several occasions shown an extraordinary degree of personal bravery. It is probable that to this quality, at all times so captivating to the French people, he owed his surname of 'the Good;' for he does not seem

to have been any otherwise entitled to it. He was passionate and vindictive, and by his impetuosity and wilfulness brought his kingdom to the verge of ruin. It might indeed be said of him that he was frank and honourable; but his honour was a mere high-flown, chivalrous principle, and not that true honour which is just as well as generous.

John began his reign with an act of flagrant injustice. He put the constable d'Eu and some other nobles to death, on the bare suspicion that they had intelligence with the English. He then conferred the office of constable, with the earldom of Angoulême, on one of his favourites. This act brought upon him the resentment of the king of Navarre, who was indignant that the earldom was not bestowed upon himself.

The king of Navarre was the son of Philip d'Evreux and of Jane queen of Navarre, daughter of Louis X. He inherited from his father very considerable territories in Normandy, and but for the Salic law, which had excluded his mother from the throne, would have been king of France. His sister had married the late king, and he was himself married to one of the daughters of the reigning monarch. His youth had been chiefly spent in the French court, and he was distinguished above all the princes of his time for his courtly address, and for his excellence in all knightly accomplishments. He was bold, liberal, and eloquent; qualities, as Mezerai observes, which are admirable

when joined to virtue, but which are pernicious when they accompany a bad heart, as they increase the means of doing harm. It seemed indeed as if this was the only use which Charles made of his fine qualities; for he was cruel, unforgiving, and artful, to the last degree. He seemed to love wickedness for its own sake, and was deservedly distinguished by the name of Charles the Bad.

Not long after the new constable had been invested in his office, he was murdered in his bed by orders of the king of Navarre, who took no pains to conceal his crime, but, on the contrary, boasted of it openly. Charles was cited before the peers of France to answer for the murder; but John wanted either the courage or the power to punish him openly. He therefore had recourse to artifice. A grand entertainment was given at Rouen, in 1356, on the king's eldest son being invested with the duchy of Normandy. Charles the Bad was invited, and John entered the castle with some armed men, who seized on Charles and his attendants as they were sitting at table. Charles was closely confined in Château Gaillard, and some of his attendants were put to death.

I told you, at the close of the last reign, that one of the last acts of Philip of Valois was to conclude a truce with England, if truce it could be called, for there still subsisted a kind of warfare between the soldiers of each nation, who were perpetually engaged in trials at arms with one an-

other. The inhabitants of every town and village were obliged to keep themselves well defended and constantly upon the watch, that they might protect themselves from the attacks of the two contending parties, and also from the numbers of disbanded soldiers who had enlisted in bands, and called themselves free companies, roving about the country, owning no masters but their own captains, and committing dreadful devastations wherever they came. These people even threatened the town of Avignon, and the pope was obliged to purchase his safety with a large sum of money.

The truce with England, such as it was, lasted till 1356. Edward construed the imprisonment of Charles of Navarre into an infringement of it, and the war, which had been but ill-smothered, again broke out. Edward the Black Prince, eldest son of the king of England, had the year before been invested by his father with the duchy of Guienne. Not contented to keep within the limits of his own duchy, he invaded John's territories, and overran the neighbouring country. John hastily assembled a numerous army, and came up with the Black Prince near Poitiers. The prince, seeing his retreat cut off, and that the French army was more than twice his own numbers, was willing to surrender on any honourable conditions; but John would agree to nothing but an unconditional surrender. The Black Prince, therefore, resolved to defend himself to the last moment, and encamped

his little army on the most advantageous spot he could find.

This was a small plain, surrounded, except on one side, by vineyards and thick hedges. The prince, having hastily thrown up some ditches and trenches to strengthen the natural defences of his position, quietly awaited the approach of the enemy. The French king was eager to commence the attack ; but the pope's legate, cardinal Perigord, who was in the French camp, was very anxious to prevent the effusion of blood. The armies came in sight of one another on Saturday, September 17, 1356; and the whole of the Sunday the cardinal was occupied in riding from one camp to the other, endeavouring to persuade each party to consent to reasonable terms. But John remained wilfully bent to exact an entire submission on the part of the prince, and Edward would agree to nothing that he thought would compromise his honour. John, blinded by passion, insisted on an immediate battle ; but the day being by that time far advanced, he was at last persuaded to remain in his quarters till the morning.

Early the next day the two armies made themselves ready for battle. The French were in three divisions. In the first were the king's three eldest sons, the dauphin, the duke of Anjou, and the duke of Berri. The second was commanded by the duke of Orleans. The king, with his youngest and favourite son Philip, were in the third. John gave

an order that the attack should be begun by three hundred chosen horsemen, and that all the rest of the cavalry, with the exception of some German troops, should be dismounted. This order occasioned great confusion. Each horseman wanted to be one of the chosen number. Those who could not be of that number were dissatisfied; and the time that should have been spent in disposing the men in order of battle was passed in disputes and squabbles amongst themselves. At last order was restored, and the attack commenced.

The three hundred chosen horsemen led the van, followed by the Germans; but in attempting to push through the vineyards which surrounded the English intrenchments, they found themselves entangled amongst the trees. Their horses were rendered unmanageable by the arrows poured on them by the English archers, and turned round, overthrowing the German cavalry in their rear. This movement had something the appearance of a repulse; and the officers who had the care of the dauphin and his brothers, either from over caution or cowardice, withdrew with the three young princes from the field. Their flight spread an alarm throughout the army, and the whole of the first and second divisions followed them, without having even faced the enemy. The king's division alone remained, and as that was superior in numbers to the whole English army, John made himself sure of victory. He did not want either for bravery

or skill, and manfully exerted both, remaining in the field, notwithstanding his being twice wounded in the face, till the close of the day. His youngest son, Philip, fought by his side, and would not be persuaded to leave his father.

At last John found that his troops had given way on every side, and that the field was lost. He saw himself entirely surrounded by the enemy, and observing amongst them a knight of Artois, named De Morbec, who, being an outlaw, had enlisted in the English army, he surrendered himself to him. The English soldiers disputed the prize with De Morbec, and while they were contending, the earl of Warwick arrived with orders from the Black Prince to conduct John and his young son, who had surrendered with him, to his tent. The prince received his royal captives with the greatest courtesy and respect. During supper he waited upon the king as if he had been his own father; and seeing him sad and heavy, he sought to cheer him by consoling words. He said to him, "Although, noble sir, it was not God's will that you should win the day, yet you singly have won the prize of valour, since it was apparent to every Englishman that none bore himself so bravely as you."

The prince conveyed his prisoners the next day to Bordeaux, where they remained till the following spring, when they were conducted to England, and were there received by Edward and his queen

Philippa with every demonstration of respect and consideration. The palace of the Savoy in London was allotted to the French king for his residence ; and during the four years he remained in England he was treated more like a guest than a prisoner.

In the mean time France was plunged in the greatest misery. The dauphin took upon himself the management of affairs. He was a young man of great talents and activity, but was too young and inexperienced to be able to govern the country at such a juncture. He was guided and misled by evil counsellors, and endeavoured to keep the people tranquil by making promises, which he did not perform, of redressing their grievances. He thus forfeited their confidence, and prepared for himself a long train of difficulties and troubles. Indeed the condition of the country was such, that it would have been scarcely possible even for the most wise and able man to stem the torrent of evil which was flowing in from all sources. The nobles, instead of lending their help to the exigencies of the state, were only thinking how they might avail themselves of the feebleness of the government to further their own private interests. They endeavoured to deprive the enfranchised peasants of their newly acquired rights, and to restore them again to a state of feudal slavery. It is scarcely to be believed what cruelties and violences these arrogant oppressors were guilty of. They pillaged the pea-

sants without mercy, burnt their dwellings, and drove them like wild beasts to seek shelter in caverns and forests.

But these wicked violences prepared their own punishment. A worm when trod on will turn again. Some peasants in Beauvoisis were talking over their grievances, and they agreed amongst themselves that it would be a justifiable deed to exterminate the whole race of the nobility and gentry. The word was no sooner given than taken: they seized on scythes, pitchforks, and whatever they could first lay hold of, and rushing to the nearest gentleman's house, they murdered all the inhabitants and set fire to the house. With hourly increasing numbers they proceeded onward, destroying and slaughtering wherever they came. The panic of the gentry was extreme; all who could, fled to the nearest fortified town. This insurrection, which was called the Jacquerie, spread with frightful rapidity, and it was impossible to foresee where it would end; for no one of the higher orders could consider himself for a moment safe, since he knew not how soon his own servants might turn against him.

Every one, however, saw that something must be done, and that speedily; the difference of party and of country was forgotten, and the English and the French all united against the Jacquerie. Even the king of Navarre, who had escaped from his

prison, united with the dauphin in this emergency, and the insurrection was soon quelled.

Thus were the provinces restored to comparative tranquillity, but the government was by no means settled. Charles of Navarre laid claim to the crown, and Paris was in a continual tumult. There was at that time in the city a man of the name of Marcel; he was the provost of the merchants, an office which, in some respects, resembled that of the lord-mayor of London. Marcel at first affected a great desire to serve his fellow-citizens, and to protect their liberties; but he soon declared himself a strenuous partisan of the king of Navarre.

In 1358 the dauphin was appointed regent. In the provinces he was able to support his authority; but in Paris Marcel had raised so strong a party in favour of the king of Navarre, that the dauphin was several times obliged to abandon the city. The contentions between Charles and him make the history of this period extremely tedious. Charles, who was very eloquent, would frequently harangue the mob from a raised platform. The dauphin would do the same. Neither party, however, confined itself entirely to a war of words; they both frequently proceeded to violence. Marcel one day entered the palace of the dauphin, and murdered two of his servants before his face. He justified himself by saying that these men had given the dauphin bad advice: he then snatched the cap, or

barrette, from the prince's head, to put upon his own, and made him wear a parti-coloured hood of red and blue, which was the badge of Navarre. The dauphin found himself obliged to submit for the time to the insolence of Marcel, but he took the first opportunity of escaping from Paris.

At the commencement of the disturbances, Marcel, under pretext of securing the city from the attacks of the free companies, had repaired and strengthened the fortifications, and planted cannon on the walls. For some time he continued steady to the king of Navarre's party, but afterwards becoming displeased with him, he entered into secret intelligence with the English, and took measures for betraying the city to them. His intentions, however, were suspected by some of his fellow-citizens, and one of them, named Jean Maillard, seeing him going slyly towards one of the city gates at midnight, accused him of an intention to open them to the enemy. A tumult arose, in which Marcel was slain, and the keys of the gate were found concealed under his cloak.

On Marcel's death the party of the king of Navarre declined, the parti-coloured hoods were thrown away, tranquillity was restored, and on August 24, 1358, the dauphin once more took possession of Paris.

The king of Navarre was more exasperated than discouraged by the turn his affairs had taken. He blockaded Paris by land and water, and cut off all

its supplies; he vowed that he would never have peace with the princes of the house of Valois, and the dauphin found himself in the utmost distress and difficulty. He had no money, and was obliged to have recourse to the leather money, such as had formerly been used in the time of Henry I. In addition to all the other calamities with which Paris was now afflicted, that of famine was beginning to be severely felt, and it seemed as if Charles the Bad would soon effect the ruin, not only of Paris, but of the whole kingdom; when suddenly his mind changed, and from some cause which historians and politicians have vainly tried to discover, he made peace with the dauphin, withdrew the blockade of Paris, and relinquished all pretensions to the crown of France.

The dauphin being now more his own master than he had ever yet been, was able to take measures for his father's release; but Edward's terms were severe; the states-general were firm in their rejection of them, and nothing could at first be done. Edward, with a view to enforce compliance with his demands, entered France with a numerous army, and marched through the country till he came to Montlheri, where he encamped. The dauphin, profiting by the experience of former disasters, avoided coming to a pitched battle. He left all the country open, but placed strong garrisons in the towns, and strongly defended himself in Paris. Edward in vain attempted to provoke him

to come to an engagement. In vain did Sir Walter Manny, and other daring warriors, ride a tilt against the barriers of Paris; the dauphin kept himself shut up within his walls, nor would he suffer any of his knights to answer the insults of the English. He, nevertheless, kept a watchful look-out upon them; and even the convent bells were not allowed to be rung for midnight prayers, as was customary, lest the watchmen should be prevented from hearing the movements of the enemy.

Edward at last broke up his camp, and advanced towards Chartres, still meeting no opposition, and amusing himself with his hawks and hounds, as if he had come to hunt, and not to fight. During his progress he was continually followed by commissioners from the dauphin and the states-general, importuning him to agree to a peace on terms which they could accept. But the English king would agree to no terms whatever; he considered the whole kingdom as within his grasp, and nothing but being its monarch would now content him. But God, "in whose rule and governance are the hearts of princes," turned the heart of this ambitious king. A more violent storm than had been before known in the memory of man overtook the English army, as it approached the village of Breigny, near Chartres. The thunder and lightning were tremendous, and was accompanied by hail of such extraordinary magnitude, that six thousand of the English horses are said to have been killed by

it, and several of the soldiers severely hurt. The king was so much impressed by the awfulness of this circumstance, that he considered it as a warning from heaven not to harden himself any longer against "the prayers of France." He immediately entered into a treaty with the dauphin, which, after a great many preliminaries, was at last concluded in 1360, and is called the treaty of Bretigny.

Edward demanded three millions of gold crowns for John's ransom, which the states, on condition of certain immunities from their king, agreed to give. It was to be paid at three instalments; and at the first payment Edward promised to set John at liberty, on receiving, as hostages, the king's three youngest sons, with the duke of Orleans, and thirty French noblemen, to guarantee the payment of the remainder. Edward agreed, on his part, to withdraw his pretensions to the crown of France, retaining, however, Calais, and all his son's late conquests in Guienne.

In October, 1360, John again entered France, after a captivity of four years. The people seemed to have forgot all their past sufferings, and when the king made his public entry into Paris, he was received with every demonstration of joy.

John was scarcely restored to his kingdom when he began to form plans for a crusade to the Holy Land. He was, however, interrupted in this scheme by the misconduct of his sons, the dukes of Anjou and of Berri. These two princes, with

the other royal hostages, had been received by Edward with the greatest courtesy and kindness. The town of Calais had been assigned them as their prison; if prison it could be called, when they were allowed the permission of going wherever they pleased, provided they returned to Calais every fourth day. But even this was considered by the two young princes as too severe a restraint. They came to Paris, and refused to return. John was exceedingly distressed at this conduct of his sons. He regarded it as a breach of his own honour, which could only be redeemed by his going and surrendering himself again as a prisoner to Edward. He accordingly returned to England. Soon afterwards he fell ill of a languishing disorder, and died at the palace of the Savoy, April 8, 1364. The king of England gave him a magnificent and royal funeral. His body was afterwards removed to France, and interred in the abbey of Saint Denis.

John was twice married: first to Bona, daughter of the blind king of Bohemia; and, secondly, to Jane of Boulogne, widow of the duke of Burgundy. By Bona he had four sons and four daughters:

Charles, who succeeded his father;

Louis, duke of Anjou;

John, duke of Berri;

Philip, duke of Burgundy;

Maria, duchess of Bar;

Jane, married Charles the Bad;

Isabella, married John Visconti, first duke of Milan.

Margaret, a nun.

John's second wife had one son by her former marriage, who died in 1361. In him ended the race of the Capetian dukes of Burgundy. The king of Navarre claimed the duchy in right of his grandmother, who was aunt to the late duke; but John, although he had a more distant claim, took possession of it, and gave it to his youngest son. The king of Navarre, as some amends for the injustice done him, had the city of Montpellier bestowed upon him in the succeeding reign.

John found so much difficulty in raising the money for the payment of his ransom, that he was obliged to recall the Jews. In consideration of their paying him a large sum of money, he granted them permission to return to France for a term of twenty years.

John founded the royal library at Paris, which consisted at first of only ten volumes.

About this time Joanna, queen of Naples, sold the city of Avignon to the popes.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XIX.

Mary. I think, mamma, that of all the terrible things you have ever told us, that insurrection of the peasants was the worst. But why was it called the Jacquerie?

Mrs. Markham. Some persons imagine the name to have originated from *Jaques bon homme*, an insulting name by which the upper classes were accustomed to call the peasantry. Others, and I believe with more reason, suppose it to have been derived from a *Jack*, a sort of short coat, which was worn by the country people. In the Chronicles of Froissart there are some dreadful particulars of this insurrection.

Mary. Do you remember any of them?

Mrs. M. The dauphiness, with the ladies of her court, were in the town of Meaux. The Jacquerie approached the town in great numbers, and the ladies were in the greatest possible alarm, having no means of making any defence. The duke of Orleans was the only nobleman with them, and they had no dependence on any of the people of the town. These people, either through cowardice or wickedness, opened their gates as soon as the mob arrived, and admitted them into the town. At that moment two of king Edward's knights passing that way, heard of the peril the dauphiness

and her ladies were in. They set spurs to their horses, and galloping into the town, found the Jacquerie surrounding the palace, and threatening to burst open the gates, and murder every one within. The two knights drew their swords, and being joined by the duke of Orleans, dispersed the Jacquerie and drove them out of the town, and slew seven thousand of them.

Richard. Three men to kill seven thousand !

Mrs. M. Of course we must suppose that these knights had some followers with them, though our historian Froissart tells us nothing about it, and only says that they were well cased in armour, and that the Jacquerie had nothing but their jackets.

George. Does he say who the two knights were?

Mrs. M. Yes ; he tells us that one was the earl of Foix, and the other the captal de Buche, the same who afterwards died of grief, as perhaps you may remember, for the death of the Black Prince.

Richard. I cannot help thinking that it was an overstretched notion of honour in king John to go back again to England ; he had better have staid at home and have tried to make his people happy and comfortable.

Mrs. M. During John's first captivity a wax taper was placed in the church of Notre Dame, at Paris, and was kept burning till his return.

Mary. You said he was four years in England, and how could a wax taper be kept burning so long ?

Mrs. M. This taper would have burnt even much longer. It was said to have been of such a prodigious length that it might have encompassed Paris, which was six miles round. The taper was wound, like a rope, round a large wheel.

Mary. I think, mamma, there is no end of the odd things you find to tell us.

Mrs. M. And I have found, to-day, many more odd things to tell you, in Dulaure's History of Paris.

Richard. Pray, mamma, will you let us hear them?

Mrs. M. I will give you a description of the daily routine of bustle in the streets of Paris, at about the middle of the fourteenth century. The first sound that was heard, as soon as the day arose, was the tinkling of little bells, which were rung by persons clothed in black, whose business it was to announce the death of such persons as had died during the night, and to call upon all good Christians to pray for the souls of the deceased.

George. I don't think that was so solemn and awful a way of telling one that somebody is dead, as our way of tolling the passing bell;—but, if you please, go on.

Mrs. M. These proclaimers of death were succeeded by the people who attended at the hot baths, and who, with loud voices, let every body know when the baths were ready, bidding all who meant to bathe to make haste before the water got

cold. After these people followed the tradesmen, who seem to have been greatly in the habit of hawking their goods about the town; and for several hours nothing was heard but the voices of butchers, millers, and the sellers of fish, fruit, and vegetables.

Richard. Is it said in the book what sort of fruit and vegetables they had at that time?

Mrs. M. The chief fruits I find mentioned are medlars, wild plums, pears and apples. It should appear that the most crude and acrid sorts were most esteemed, as also the most pungent and strongly tasted vegetables. Peas, beans, and turnips were cultivated; but leeks, chervil, purslain, cress, anise, shallot, and garlic were in great request, particularly garlic, of which a kind of sauce was made which was spread on bread, and eaten as we do bread and butter. Besides these tradespeople, there were various artificers who followed their calling in the open streets; amongst these were the menders of old clothes, who stood ready prepared with needles and threads to repair any hole or accidental rent that the clothes of a passenger might have met with.

Mary. That was a very convenient custom.

Mrs. M. The Parisians had also another custom, which I don't quite so much approve of, which was, that when any disaster befel them, they would stand at the doors of their houses, and with loud voices proclaim their misfortunes to all the passers-by.

Richard. What a noise and chattering there must have been ! I would not have lived in Paris for all the world !

Mrs. M. And then, in addition to all the other noises, was the clamorous voices of the monks and scholars, who went begging about the streets.

Mary. Scholars begging, mamma !

Mrs. M. The scholars of Paris were then a very ill-conducted set, notwithstanding that one of their schools had the imposing title of “ *L’Ecole des bons Enfants.*”

Mary. I wonder their masters did not keep them in better order.

Mrs. M. I am afraid the masters wanted keeping in good order themselves, for they are accused of showing a very unjustifiable indulgence to their pupils of high degree, and of treating the poorer ones with neglect and barbarity ; and this perhaps was one cause which drove them to beg in the streets. There is an old book, written about this time, entitled *Miseriæ Scholasticorum*, in which the author pathetically describes the ill conduct of the masters to the poorer scholars, “ whose faces,” he says, “ were pale and haggard, their hair neglected, and their clothes in rags.” There is an old manuscript grammar of this time, the frontispiece of which is a heart-rending picture of the interior of a school, in which the master is represented with a most enormous rod in his half-raised

hand, ready to let it fall on the shoulders of his poor scholars, who are standing around him with their books, and who are drawn with their shoulders naked, in readiness to receive the impending blow. Indeed rods were so much in use, that they were reckoned as amongst the necessary expenses of a college.

Richard. Was any thing new taught, or did they go on learning the same sort of things as formerly?

Mrs. M. I believe there was very little change, unless, indeed, that the Latin was employed less exclusively, and the vulgar tongue, that is the language of the country, began to take its place. I ought not to say that there was *nothing* new; the pretended science of astrology became about this time a favourite study. I am not quite sure whether or not it was taught in the university of Paris; but this I know, that master Gervaise, astrologer to Charles V., founded a college in Paris for the express use of students in astrology, which college was afterwards suppressed, and the building is now a barrack for veteran soldiers.

George. And a very good use to put it to.

Mrs. M. The university of Paris was filled with students of all nations. A writer of the time of St. Louis gives the following description of them. The French, he says, were proud, vain-glorious, and effeminate; the Germans were rough-tem-

pered and vulgar ; the Normans were vain and boasting ; the English were drunkards and poltroons.

George. Nay, mamma, that was too bad ! They may have been drunkards, but I am sure they never could have been poltroons.

Mrs. M. I fear the English did not at that time enjoy a very high national reputation. Petrarch, the great Italian poet, who lived in the fourteenth century, says, " In my youth the inhabitants of Britain, whom they call English, were the most cowardly of all the barbarians, inferior even to the vile Scotch."

George. I should like to have asked that impertinent Petrarch, how the English, if they were such cowards, could win the battles of Cressy and Poitiers ?

Mrs. M. Petrarch had the candour afterwards to acknowledge, that " the English, having been trained under a wise and brave king, Edward III., were become a brave and warlike people." However, with regard to the victories of Cressy and of Poitiers, the history of them clearly shows us that the English owed them not more to their own bravery than to the insubordination of the French.

Petrarch also says of a French army, " When you enter their camp, you might think yourself in a tavern. The soldiers are doing nothing but eating, drinking, and revelling in their tents. When

called out to battle they submit to no chief, obey no orders, but run hither and thither like bees that have lost their hive ; and when they are made to fight, they do nothing for the love of their country, but are wholly swayed by vanity, interest, and pleasure."

Richard. How came this Italian poet to know any thing about French camps?

Mrs. M. He visited France twice. The first time was soon after the battle of Cressy, and he gives in a letter to a friend a very moving picture of the state of France. He says that the country appeared everywhere desolated by fire and sword. The fields lay waste and untilled. The houses were falling in ruins, excepting here and there one which was made into a fortress ; and traces of the English, and of the havoc they had made, might everywhere be seen. Paris, he says, looked forlorn and desolate ; the highways were overgrown with weeds and brambles, and many of the streets deserted ; and the Parisians wore a sad and cast-down look.

Richard. When one thinks of these things it takes off very much from the pleasure of boasting of the victories of Cressy and Poitiers.

Mrs. M. Petrarch's second visit was immediately after king John's return, when he was sent by the duke of Milan to congratulate him on his restoration to liberty. Petrarch has left us a very

pleasing description of Charles V., whose reign we shall enter on to-morrow, but who was at that time dauphin.

Richard. Pray, mamma, what does he say of him ; for I like always to know beforehand as much as I can of people ?

Mrs. M. He says that he was astonished at the cultivation of his mind, and the polished elegance of his manners. But what he most of all admired him for was, the wisdom and moderation with which he would converse on all subjects, the respect he showed to men of learning and experience, and his own ardent desire of obtaining knowledge.

George. What a comfort it will be to come to a good king again? I really think we have not had one since Saint Louis.

CHAPTER XX.

CHARLES V., SURNAMED LE SAGE.

[Years after Christ, 1364—1380.]



Charles V., with the castle of Vincennes in the distance.

CHARLES on ascending the throne found himself encompassed by cares and difficulties. His kingdom was dismembered by a foreign foe, his finances were exhausted, his people harassed by the continual depredations of the free companies, and the government weak and disorganized; but by his

extraordinary prudence and ability he delivered his country from all its worst grievances, and placed it in a more prosperous condition than it had for a long time known.

This king, deservedly surnamed the Wise, was one of the very few good kings who have sat on the throne of France. He had a great capacity, an extraordinary command of temper, and was considerate and kind to his attendants. Frugal and economical in his personal expenses, he yet knew how to be magnificent and liberal on all proper occasions. He loved and encouraged men of learning, and had himself received a more learned education than was at that time customary amongst princes.

The kings of France had hitherto been little more than the leaders of armies, and to be valiant was often their only merit; but in Charles the Wise the French saw for the first time a monarch who could regulate the march of an army without engaging personally in the campaign. Edward III. used to say of him, that of all the competitors he ever contended with, Charles was the one who never appeared against him, and yet gave him the most trouble. Charles, however, though he did not himself lead his troops, knew how to appoint good generals. The most famous of these was the constable Du Guesclin, and the French used to boast that they had the wisest king and the bravest general in Europe.

Du Guesclin was a gentleman of Bretagne, who had already distinguished himself in the wars with the English. Charles gave him the command of an army which he sent in 1367 into Spain to the assistance of Henry of Trastamare, who had been invited by the Castilians to take the crown of Castile from his half-brother Pedro, surnamed the Cruel. Pedro applied for aid to the Black Prince, who marched into Spain, and on April 3, 1367, encountered the army of Du Guesclin, near Najara. The French were completely defeated, and Du Guesclin was taken prisoner. The loss of this battle, though fatal at the time to the cause of Trastamare, was yet a gain rather than a loss to Charles, who had entered into the war chiefly with a view of clearing his own country from the oppression of the free companies. These had gladly enlisted in the army of Du Guesclin, and had flocked like birds of prey to the Spanish war.

After the battle of Najara, Pedro was replaced upon the throne of Castile, and remained secure as long as the English troops staid in Spain. But when the Black Prince, disgusted by the ingratitude of Pedro, returned to Bordeaux, the tyrant, no longer checked by his presence, resumed his barbarities. The Castilians again rose in arms; Pedro was killed in battle, and Henry of Trastamare was established on the throne.

It was suspected that while the Black Prince was in Spain, Pedro had contrived to give him a

slow poison; certain it is, that on his return to Bordeaux his health was completely broken down; and what was still more lamentable, his temper, which was formerly mild and forgiving, was now, from the fever of his body, become irritable and vindictive, and he gave frequent causes of dissatisfaction to his Gascon subjects, who were jealous of the preference which he showed for the English. Charles, who kept a watchful eye upon the possessions of the English in France, saw with satisfaction these rising discontents, and availed himself of them to allure many of the nobles of Gascony from their allegiance to Edward. At last, having sufficiently paved his way, he assembled the states, and summoned the king of England as his vassal to appear before it, and on his non-appearance he pronounced him rebellious and disobedient, and declared all his possessions in France forfeited. Du Guesclin, who had some time before regained his liberty, and had been made constable of France, was sent with a powerful army to Guienne. The Black Prince was unable, from the state of his health, to take the field. His brother John of Gaunt had, therefore, the command of the army, which, although strengthened by reinforcements from England, was yet unable to arrest the progress of the French, partly because the hearts of the people naturally inclined towards Charles, considering him as their legitimate sovereign, and partly because it was the policy of Charles to

order his generals to avoid pitched battles. They were instructed to keep strong garrisons in all the fortified places, and to sally forth and molest the enemy whenever they could do so without incurring much risk themselves. The English thus saw their numbers diminish in small encounters with the enemy, without having an opportunity of distinguishing themselves by any signal achievement.

During these wars the valiant Du Guesclin died. He had laid siege to a castle in Languedoc, and the governor promised to surrender it on a specified day if not relieved in the interval. Du Guesclin, who was ill of a fever, expired before the appointed day arrived, and the governor was advised by his people not to keep to his agreement; but he declared that he would be as true to that great warrior in death as he would have been to him in life, and on the day originally fixed, he marched, followed by his garrison, to the French camp, and placed the keys of his castle on the bier of the deceased hero. The king was deeply grieved by the death of Du Guesclin; he raised a magnificent monument to his memory in the abbey of Saint Denis, and placed on it a lamp, which was kept burning for many centuries. Du Guesclin with his dying words exhorted his soldiers never to forget what he had so often told them, that in whatever country they should have to carry on war, they should never consider the clergy, the women, children, or the poor, as their enemies.

When Du Guesclin was dead, many of his captains refused the office of constable, as deeming themselves unworthy to succeed him ; at last it was accepted by Oliver du Clisson.

The affairs of the English in France rapidly declined from this time, and Edward had the mortification of beholding his boasted conquests gradually fall from his grasp. This, added to his affliction at the death of his incomparable son, embittered his latter days, and probably shortened them. He died in 1377, and during the feeble reign of his grandson, Richard II., the English lost every thing they had possessed in France, excepting Calais, Bayonne, Bordeaux, and Cherburg.

I must now say something of the affairs of Bretagne. When last we spoke of them, the son of De Montfort was still a child, and Charles de Blois was in captivity ; but in 1364, Charles had regained his liberty, the young De Montfort was become a man, and the civil war was again renewed. On the 20th of September in that year (1364), Charles de Blois was killed in a battle which was fought near Auray, and the king of France consented to acknowledge De Montfort as duke of Bretagne.

The king of Navarre, during all this time, never ceased showing his settled enmity to Charles. He carried his wickedness so far as to give him poison, and though the effect was checked by antidotes, yet it finally caused his death.

In 1378 Charles of Navarre sent his eldest son to Paris, under the pretence of paying a visit of respect to the king his uncle, but in reality as a spy. He is also accused of having commissioned his son to give the king another and a stronger dose of poison. How far the accusation was true cannot now be known; it was, however, believed at the time. The young prince of Navarre was put in prison, and two of his attendants, who were supposed to be agents in the plot, were beheaded.

The king's health was declining for some years before his death; and his physicians declared that his life could only be preserved by keeping open an issue, and that if it dried up he must assuredly die. In 1380 he received the fatal warning, the issue dried up, and could by no means be kept open. Charles prepared for death with the greatest fortitude. He made every regulation that prudence could suggest for the security of his sons, who were very young, and of the kingdom, and awaited his final hour with piety and resignation. He died Sept. 16, 1380, at the château de Beauté sur Maine; he was in the 44th year of his age, and had reigned 16 years.

He married Jane of Bourbon, and left two sons :

Charles, who succeeded him ;

Louis, duke of Orleans.

Charles the Wise left the royal coffers well filled with treasure. He erected many stately buildings.

He added greatly to the library founded by his father, which at his death was increased to nine hundred volumes, and was placed in one of the towers of the Louvre.

Charles entered into a treaty of amity with the king of Scotland; and a guard of twenty-four natives of Scotland, which had been formed originally by Saint Louis, was now increased to a hundred, and was appointed to be always in attendance on the king.

The king of Navarre survived his victim some years. His death, which took place in 1387, was occasioned by the carelessness of one of his attendants, who set fire to some bandages steeped in brandy, which the king wore about him on account of some cutaneous disorder. By this means he was so dreadfully burnt, that he died in the greatest tortures.

In this reign pope Gregory V. removed the papal see from Avignon to Rome. After the death of Gregory great confusion arose amongst the cardinals, relative to electing a new pope. The schism lasted forty years.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XX.

George. I think, mamma, it was very boasting of the French to say that they had the wisest king and the bravest general in Europe at the very time

that our king Edward and all his captains were alive.

Richard. I think the French would have been very ungrateful if they had not boasted of their king; for I am sure he was a very good king to them.

Mrs. M. One of the things I admire in Charles was his exactitude in business; a virtue which is quite as essential in a king as it is in a tradesman.

Mary. Why, what sort of business could a king of France have to attend to?

Mrs. M. The cares of government involve a great deal of business; such, for instance, as that of furnishing magazines, and providing means for supplying the wants of an army. These cares had usually been left to the ministers, but Charles took them upon himself; and to his personal attention to them much of the success of his arms may be justly attributed.

George. But I thought you said he never would let his generals come to a battle.

Mrs. M. He found that without a battle he could waste and diminish the strength of the English. He dreaded, from the experience of past misfortunes, to place the fortune of a war upon a single blow; and to prevent his generals from committing that error, he never would trust them with the command of a large army. His method was to divide the forces of his kingdom into five parts; four of these were employed under different leaders to harass the enemy in different places; the fifth

division he kept with himself, ready to push any advantage, or repair any loss, that might accrue to the others.

Richard. And I suppose that was the most politic plan, because it answered.

Mrs. M. Charles was no less exact and methodical in the manner of his private life than in the discharge of public affairs. He rose early, and retired to rest early at night; and during the day was constantly employed. When he had ended his morning devotions, he applied himself to the affairs of state. He dined at noon, and afterwards took the exercise requisite for his health.

Mary. Poor man! what a shocking thing it must have been to him to know that he had swallowed poison, and to think that he might die any day.

Mrs. M. That, my dear child, is nothing more than what we all ought to think; for we none of us know the day nor the hour when we may be called hence. But I agree with you that the knowledge that he had been poisoned must have been a great trial of Charles's fortitude; and it is amongst the things for which he is to be commended, that this knowledge did not paralyze his mind, nor deprive him of his energy. On the contrary, it made him the more earnest to employ to the best purpose every hour that remained to him. Expecting his death daily, he was the more anxious to provide against all the dangers to which his young son would be exposed. To this end he

Mary. What fault was to be found in them particularly?

Mrs. M. They are much ridiculed by the writers of the times for the absurdity of their dress. Amongst other things we are told that they adopted such an extraordinary fashion in their boots that the king published an edict against it.

Mary. Pray, mamma, what were these boots like?

Mrs. M. They were intended to be like a bird : the front projected in a sharp point at the top in the shape of a beak, and the back of the heel was lengthened out, to look like a claw. I cannot imagine any thing more ridiculous.

Richard. Was the rest of the men's dress equally ridiculous?

Mrs. M. Dress, about this time, underwent, in France, a very remarkable change. Heretofore the nobles were clad in long flowing robes, and they, and all persons in any respectable station of middle life, wore long hoods, which hung down on the back ; but now these robes and hoods were left off, if not universally, at least by the younger nobility, who, in place of the long robe, adopted a tight short jacket, which exposed to view the whole form of the limbs.

George. They must have looked like so many postillions.

Mrs. M. These innovations did not come in all at once. A French writer of the reign of Philip of

Valois reproaches his countrymen with their dress, which he tells them makes them look like so many merry-andrews. He adds, that they are so fantastic in their modes, that they are always in one foolish extreme or another; sometimes their clothes, he says, are too long, at others too short; at one time too tight, and at another too wide.

George. I suspect the good gentleman was rather hard to please.

Mrs. M. He inveighs, above all, at their changeableness, and complains that the same fashion seldom lasts more than six years.



THE CONSTABLE DU GUESCLIN.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHARLES VI., SURNAMED LE BIEN AIMÉ.

[Years after Christ, 1380—1422.]



Combat between Macaire and the dog of Montargis (from Montfaucon).

WE are now come to the most disastrous period in the whole long history of France. We shall see the fruits of the late king's prudence and care totally destroyed; we shall see the sovereign a miserable maniac; the princes of the blood sacrificing their duty to the indulgence of their own base passions; and the nobles acting as if they partook in the madness of their monarch, and the kingdom brought to

the very verge of ruin. But I must relate all things in order.

The young king was only thirteen years old when his father died. The duke of Anjou was appointed regent during his minority, but the dukes of Berry and of Burgundy each desired to have a share in the government, and the jealousies and contentions amongst these three princes, who were all equally violent, selfish, and greedy of gain, were, as I may truly say, the beginning of troubles. The duke of Burgundy had the best abilities; but the duke of Anjou was the most ambitious, and made no scruple of sacrificing the interests of France, and of his nephew, to forward his own private schemes.

A short time before the late king's death, Johanna, queen of Naples, a descendant of Charles of Anjou, having been driven from her throne by Charles Durazzo, her nearest relation and next heir, in revenge for this conduct, adopted the duke of Anjou. Durazzo was in possession of the kingdom of Naples, but the duke of Anjou, nevertheless, determined to assert the claim Johanna had given him. To that end he got possession of all the money which his brother, the late king, had left in the royal treasury; together with a great quantity of gold and silver which was concealed in one of the palaces, and the secret of which had been confided to one of the king's old servants, from whom Anjou contrived to extort it.

With this ill-gotten wealth the duke of Anjou raised an army, and marched into Italy. He at first obtained some slight advantages; but they were soon followed by fatal reverses. His army was destroyed, his baggage lost, and he was reduced to poverty and distress; one small silver cup being all that remained to him of the immense quantity of gold and silver which he had brought from France. He did not long survive his misfortunes, and died in 1384 of vexation and disappointment. His son, however, still asserted his claim, and took on himself the title of Louis II., king of Naples.

In France meantime the duke of Burgundy had assumed the reins of power, and used them as his brother had done, for his own purposes: he had married the heiress of the earl of Flanders, and, in 1382, he engaged the young king in a war with the Flemings, to quell an insurrection they had raised against their earl. The French troops gained a great victory at Rosebec; and Charles, who had accompanied his army in person, was much elated at this his first success in arms. On his return to Paris he found that city in a state of tumult on account of the exorbitancy of the taxes. The insurrection was soon quelled, and the offenders punished with great severity. Some were publicly executed, and others were put in sacks and thrown into the river.

In 1385 Charles married Isabella of Bavaria, a very beautiful princess, but of depraved manners.

She brought much misery, not only to her husband, but to the whole kingdom.

The young king's education had been entirely neglected; and his uncles had promoted his passing his time in frivolous amusements, that he might the less interfere with their schemes of ambition. Although hasty and impetuous, he had many good qualities; he was of an affectionate and obliging temper; and it is related of him that he never forgot a kindness which he had received, nor broke a promise which he had made. He had a remarkable facility in remembering every person's face whom he had once seen; and, amongst other peculiarities, is noted for having possessed an extraordinary degree of bodily strength, and, it is said, could bend a horse-shoe with his hands.

In 1386 the French government meditated an invasion of England; but as France had at that time no navy, the requisite vessels were either purchased or hired from other countries. They amounted to nine hundred when collected at Sluys. Every gentleman who prepared for this expedition was provided with an attendant, styled "*a pillard*," or, in other words, a robber, whose express business was to pillage for his master's benefit. One part of the equipage was an enormous wooden castle, which could be taken to pieces and put together again. But all these mighty preparations came to nothing, through the jealousy of the duke

de Berri, who, though inferior in abilities to the duke of Burgundy, was yet equally ambitious, and took every opportunity to thwart and perplex his brother in all his measures. The ships were detained at Sluys till after the stormy season commenced, and the art of navigation being but ill understood, many of the vessels were wrecked. The wooden castle, which was a much vaunted invention, drifted to the mouth of the Thames, and became an easy spoil to the English mariners.

In the following year a fleet was again assembled. The men at arms were all prepared, and every thing was ready, when the expedition was a second time prevented from sailing. The duke of Bretagne, either from personal hatred to Oliver de Clisson, who was to have commanded, or from a wish to serve his allies, the English, invited De Clisson to pay him a friendly visit. When he had got him in his power he made him his prisoner. He detained him only a short time, but in the meanwhile the men at arms dispersed themselves, and the intended invasion of England was given up.

In 1388, the king, being of age, took the administration of affairs into his own hands. He deprived the duke of Burgundy of his offices, and bestowed them upon his own brother, the duke of Orleans. He recalled several of his father's old servants, and displaced the creatures of the dukes,

his uncles. He revoked several unjust laws and oppressive taxes, and showed every wish to rule his people with justice. This was the period in which he obtained the surname of *Bien Aimé*; but this flattering promise did not last long.

The constable De Clisson was attacked in the streets of Paris by Peter de Craon, a man of infamous character, who in the belief that he had killed his victim, fled for protection to the duke of Bretagne. De Clisson, however, was only severely wounded, and when he recovered called loudly for vengeance on the assassin. The duke of Bretagne was required to give him up; and on his refusal to do so, the king was exceedingly enraged, and resolved to march in person into Bretagne to punish its contumelious duke. He ordered his troops to rendezvous at Mans, and repaired there himself early in the month of August, 1391. The impatience of his spirit had thrown him into a fever, and his attendants endeavoured to prevail on him to defer his march into Bretagne. But he would not listen to them, and set forth, notwithstanding the heat of the weather and his own indisposition.

The way was dusty, and the king rode apart from his company, followed only by two pages, one of whom carried his lance and the other his helmet. Froissart tells us that the king's sufferings from the heat were greatly increased by his wearing a jerkin of thick velvet, and a heavy cap of scarlet cloth

adorned with pearls. As he was riding by the side of a forest near Mans, suddenly a tall and ghastly man rushed out from amongst the trees, and seizing his bridle, exclaimed, "Stop, king! you are going where you are betrayed!" The figure then as suddenly disappeared.

Charles was greatly agitated by this incident. While he was ruminating upon it, he arrived at a sandy plain, where one of the pages, being overpowered by the heat, fell asleep, and let the lance which he carried fall against the helmet borne by his companion. The king, being startled by the clanking noise, was seized immediately by a sudden frenzy: he imagined himself pursued by enemies, and riding fiercely amongst his attendants with his sword drawn, would have killed or wounded several of them, if they had not fled. At last, his sword being broken, one of his servants sprang up behind him, and held him tightly by the arms till the rest had secured him with ropes, and in this manner he was bound down in a cart and conveyed back to Mans. He remained in a state of frenzy for some months, and then recovered his senses; but the expedition to Bretagne was not resumed.

In 1393 another fatal accident brought on a return of the king's disorder. The circumstance is thus related:—At the marriage of one of the queen's attendants, the king and five young noblemen of the court agreed to appear in the character

of savages, in what the English called a *disguisement*. Their dresses were made of coarse cloth covered with flax, which was fastened on with pitch. On account of the inflammable nature of their dress, orders had been given that the flambeau bearers (for in those days there were neither lamps nor chandeliers) should stand close to the wall; but the duke of Orleans, ignorant of this order, and not thinking of the consequences, took a torch from one of the bearers, and holding it close to one of the savages that he might the better find out who he was, set fire to the flax. Five of the savages were instantly in flames. The sixth, who was the king, was standing at a little distance talking to the duchess of Berri. She had the presence of mind to envelop him in her mantle, and thus saved his life. Four of the others, who had entered the room chained together, were burnt to death; the fifth, extricating himself from the chain, rushed to a large cistern of water which was placed in the buttery for the purpose of rinsing the drinking cups, and plunging into it saved his life.

The noise and confusion in the hall were extreme. The king was conveyed to his bed, but he was so much shocked by this dreadful catastrophe that he could get no sleep all night. At last towards morning he fell into a dose, from which he was presently roused by the voices of the mob, who, hearing something of the accident, assembled tumultuously round the palace, and would not be

convinced that the king was not amongst the sufferers unless they saw him. He was therefore obliged to rise and parade about the streets for the purpose of pacifying the people. All this brought on a return of his delirium. From that time till his death he was never entirely restored to reason, or, if he had lucid intervals, they were very short, and only made him feel the more the misery of his situation. The people meanwhile suffered the grievous oppression of being under the rule of many masters.

The first struggle for power was between the duke of Burgundy and his nephew the duke of Orleans, the king's brother. These two princes bore an inveterate hatred to each other, and their two duchesses also entered into the same feelings of enmity. The duchess of Burgundy, who was very ill-tempered and disagreeable, and prided herself on having been the heiress of Flanders, hated the duchess of Orleans, and affected to despise her, because she was of inferior birth to herself. The duchess of Orleans was Valentina, daughter of the duke of Milan. She was very beautiful and engaging, though of a very high spirit. She had great influence over the poor king, and sometimes when he was in the paroxysms of madness, his attendants would send for Valentina, whose presence would instantly calm his violence.

In 1403 the duke of Burgundy died. His son John succeeded to his possessions and to his ambition, and the struggle for power was carried on

between the two cousins with even more bitterness than that which had characterized it before in the contentions between the uncle and nephew. The history of France is at this period little else but a history of the outrages committed by these two selfish and vindictive men. At last the duke of Burgundy filled the measure of his guilt by causing the duke of Orleans to be assassinated in the streets of Paris. Valentina and her children called loudly for justice on the murderer, and the duke of Burgundy was cited to Paris to answer for his crime. He came, but attended by such a numerous body of armed men, that the council found it necessary to acquit him. The duke of Orleans left three sons, Charles, Philip, and John. Besides these he had an illegitimate son named the count de Dunois. Charles, the young duke, entered a protest against the acquittal of the duke of Burgundy, and called on all France to revenge his father's death. But the father had made himself so odious by his misconduct, that no one listened to the appeal of the son: on the contrary, the Parisians received the duke of Burgundy into their city; at which Valentina, who was a woman of ungoverned temper, actually died of grief and rage.

The party of the Burgundians now gained the ascendancy in affairs; the opposite party were called Armagnacs. The young duke of Orleans had married a daughter of the count of Armagnac, and suffered himself to be governed by his father-

in-law. The Armagnacs assumed the badge of a white scarf with a St. George's cross; that of the Burgundians was a St. Andrew's cross upon a red scarf. Both parties endeavoured to possess themselves of the king's person, and to govern in his name. But all they understood by government was to oppress the people, and to imprison and put to death (if they could) those whom they considered their enemies. The king, during his short intervals of reason, would sometimes make attempts to rid himself of both Burgundians and Armagnacs; but these efforts only tended to increase the confusion.

Meantime the queen, Isabella of Bavaria, led a licentious life, neglecting the king and her children, who were often in want of absolute necessities, while she was sharing in the plunder of the people. Part of that plunder she spent in frivolous extravagances; the rest she laid up to make a fund for herself, in case she should find it necessary to abandon France.

During all this time France and England remained at peace. The reign of Richard II. had been too weak and frivolous, and that of the usurper Henry IV. too full of troubles, to allow either of them to engage in a foreign war; but on the accession of Henry V. the case was altered. That young prince was energetic and martial, and, being at peace at home, was able to be enterprising abroad. He revived the almost forgotten

pretension of Edward III. to the crown of France, and with no other pretext declared war on France, and landed at Havre, Aug. 14th, 1415, with 36,000 men. His first operation was to lay siege to Harfleur, which, though bravely defended by the citizens and a few neighbouring gentlemen, yet, receiving no aid from the government, was obliged to surrender. The loss of Harfleur seemed first to rouse the contending parties at Paris to a sense of their danger. The oriflamme was unfurled; an army was collected; but the jealousies and animosities amongst the nobles occasioned so many impediments to its march, that Henry traversed the country from Harfleur nearly to Calais without meeting any thing to oppose his progress. But, to use the quaint words of an old historian, "the very abundance of the country, aided by the climate, had been fighting the battles of the land." The heat of the weather, and the quantity of fruit which the English had indulged in on their march, had occasioned so much illness amongst them, that by the time Henry reached Agincourt his army was greatly reduced in numbers. Of those who remained many were so weak with illness and fatigue, that they could scarcely sit upon their horses.

At Agincourt, on October 24th, 1415, the French army, commanded by the constable d'Albret, came up with the English; and on the following day France experienced a still more disastrous defeat than even those of Cressy and Poitiers.

The constable d'Albret committed the great error of marshalling his men on a spot of ground too small for their vast number (which was four times greater than that of the enemy); so that the soldiers impeded each other for want of room. The ground also was wet and marshy, and the footmen, at every step, sank up to their knees in mud. The knights and nobles rushed on without order to the front of the army, and scarcely any officers were left to command the main body, which soon gave way. It is a remarkable fact, that the chief brunt of the day fell on the nobles, who suffered much more than the common soldiers. The dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, with 1400 other gentlemen, were taken prisoners; the constable d'Albret and two of the duke of Burgundy's brothers, with the duke of Alençon, were amongst the slain. When the battle was over, Henry found himself too weak to improve his victory by any hostile proceeding; he conducted his wearied soldiers to Calais, and from thence embarked from England with his prisoners.

This great and unexpected reverse, instead of uniting the Burgundians and Armagnacs against the common enemy, only gave them another object of contention, namely, who should obtain the vacant office of constable. In this contest the count of Armagnac succeeded, and he, for a time, made himself master of Paris.

The king had three sons; Louis, John, and

Charles. The two eldest died very nearly together. The duke of Anjou (the king's cousin, and titular king of Naples) was accused of having poisoned them, to make way for Charles, the youngest, who had married his daughter. Charles, though only sixteen when he succeeded to the rank of dauphin, took an active part in affairs : he joined the Armagnacs, and by his advice his mother, who was become infamous by her vices, was shut up in the castle at Tours. She, however, regained her liberty, and, joining with the Burgundians, ever after pursued her son with unrelenting hatred.

On May 28, 1418, one of the gates of Paris was opened at night by a friend of the duke of Burgundy ; and a party of his men entered the town, and rode about the streets, proclaiming, " Peace and Burgundy !" But this polluted word *peace* was only the prelude to a general slaughter of all the Armagnacs. The count himself was amongst the victims ; and the scenes of ferocity which at this time took place in Paris have no parallel in the history of any other civilized country.

At the commencement of the tumult, the life of the dauphin was saved by Chastel, the governor of the Bastile, who woke him from his sleep, and, without giving him time to put on his clothes, hurried with him to the Bastile, where he kept him concealed till he could escape out of the city.

The queen and the duke of Burgundy made a triumphant entry into Paris, while the streets were

actually streaming with the blood of the murdered Armagnacs. Meanwhile king Henry landed a second time in France, and made himself master of Rouen, and of the whole of Normandy, before the contending parties seemed aware of his presence. They now saw that it was too late to attempt to oppose him by force ; they therefore resolved to try what could be done by treaty. Conferences were held in a tent in a park near Meulan, between Henry and Isabella, who acted for her husband. But nothing definitive was determined on, excepting that Henry should marry Catherine, the queen's youngest daughter. The dauphin and the duke of Burgundy were present at these conferences ; but even here, though so much was at stake, their mutual hatred broke out, and each endeavoured to counteract the object which the other wished to gain.

The dauphin had an attendant who had formerly been a servant to the late duke of Orleans. This man, whose name was Jean Louvet, had long meditated to revenge his master's death by assassinating, if he could, the duke of Burgundy. He and du Chastel, who entered into his designs, endeavoured to procure an opportunity of effecting them, by persuading the dauphin to pretend an earnest wish to be reconciled to the duke. Ancient records are silent, and modern authors are not agreed, as to whether the dauphin was or was not privy to their plot. The Searcher of hearts alone knows in what degree he participated in it. The dauphin

and the duke had an interview, in which, with hatred in their hearts, they swore to assist each other as friends and brothers. They had another interview, August 28, 1419, on the bridge of Montereau sur Yonne; and Louvet and du Chastel, leaping a barrier that was placed across the bridge for the security of each party, stabbed the duke with their swords, as he was kneeling down to kiss the dauphin's hand.

The duke of Burgundy had only one son, who is distinguished from the other princes of his house by the title of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy. This prince had never taken a part in the disturbances and crimes of the times; but this atrocious deed roused him to revenge. He entered into a friendly treaty with the king of England, and in the hope of for ever excluding the dauphin from the throne of France, he procured Henry to be declared regent during the life of the present king, and entitled to the succession to the throne after his death. Charles, probably unconscious of what he did, was made to acknowledge Henry as his successor. Henry married the princess Catherine; and the two kings of France and England, with their two queens, made a triumphant entry into Paris.

The parliament of Paris consented to this appointment of Henry to the regency, but stipulated that the rights of the people should be respected, and that they should continue to be governed by

their own laws. To these conditions, I believe, Henry strictly adhered ; he, however, exercised one instance of severity, which was perhaps not displeasing to the Parisians, in putting to death L'Ile Adam, an infamous agent of the late duke of Burgundy, and a man who had been particularly active in the massacre of the Armagnacs.

The dauphin, while these things were passing, had retired to Poitiers with a few friends ; he was here joined by some of the members of the parliament and the university of Paris ; and though to all appearance he was cast out from the throne, yet the hearts of almost all true Frenchmen were with him. The presence of the duke of Burgundy and of the English army obliged them, however, to conceal their sentiments.

The king of England was, in the autumn of 1421, obliged to return to England, leaving his brother, the duke of Clarence, his lieutenant-general in France. Clarence was slain in a skirmish with a body of Scotch troops in the pay of the dauphin ; and Henry hastened back to France, declaring that he would not leave the dauphin a single town ; but the ill state of his health prevented him from putting his threat into execution. He went to Paris, where he exhibited to the people his infant son (afterwards Henry VI.) as their future king ; and assembling a plenary court, he and the child were both crowned with royal diadems. This was nearly the last act of his life. He died at the palace of

Vincennes, August 28, 1422, leaving his brother, the duke of Bedford, regent of France.

On the 21st of the following October, Charles VI. ended his unhappy life. He died in the palace of St. Pol in Paris. He lived 55 years, and reigned 42 years, thirty of which he had passed in a state of almost constant insanity. He married Isabella of Bavaria, and had three sons and five daughters :

Louis, }
John, } died before their father ;

Charles, succeeded his father ;

Isabella, married first, Richard II. of England ;
and, secondly, the duke of Orleans ;

Jane, married John de Montfort, duke of Bretagne ;

Michella, married Philip, duke of Burgundy ;

Catherine, married Henry V. of England ;

Mary, a nun.

That I might not break the thread of my narrative, I omitted to speak in their proper place of the affairs of Naples. Durazzo was slain in a popular tumult in 1385, and Louis II., the young duke of Anjou, took possession of the crown of Naples, and reigned there till 1399, when, having offended some of the nobles, he was driven from his throne, and retired to France. He died in 1417. In 1421, his son Louis III. made an attempt on Naples ; but he experienced nothing but a succession of disasters ; and at last "nothing remained to him of his kingdom, but the road out of it."

In 1396, an expedition was sent from France to succour the king of Hungary, who was at war with Bajazet, the great Turkish conqueror. The expedition failed, through the ill conduct of the French themselves. Their army was defeated with dreadful slaughter near Nicopolis.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XXI.

Richard. Did you not, George, think of Shakspeare's play of King Henry V. when mamma came to that part about the poor English soldiers being so ill and tired before the battle of Agincourt?

George. I remember it very well, and how the Frenchman describes the English army, and says,

Their horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,
With torch staves in their hands, and their poor jades
Lob down their heads, dropping the hide and hips ;
The gum down-roping from their pale dead eyes,
And, in their pulled dull mouths, the gimmel bit
Lies foul with chewed grass, still and motionless.

Henry V. Act IV. Scene 2.

—By-the-by, mamma, what is a gimmel bit?

Mrs. Markham. It means a jointed bit, running in rings. We will ask your papa to be so kind as to read that fine play to us after tea. In the mean time it has reminded me, that plays were first performed in France about this period.

Richard. That was, if I mistake not, about the time they were first introduced into England.

Mrs. M. You are very right : the first theatrical representation we find spoken of in England was, I believe, in 1378. In 1385 we find mention made in the history of France of a play exhibited in Paris in honour of the marriage of Charles IV. and Isabella of Bavaria ; but I do not understand whether this was the first exhibition of the kind or not. It represented the history of our Saviour's passion and resurrection, and was made to last eight days. It was performed by monks. There were eighty-seven characters in the piece, and St. John was one of the principal speakers.

Mary. I think acting plays was a very silly employment for monks.

Mrs. M. So I suppose the prévôt of Paris thought, for he forbade them to act any more. But the king, who had been present at the representation, was so much pleased with it, that he incorporated the performers into a company, entitled "the Master, Governors, and Fraternity, of the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord."—This fraternity, or *confrerie*, as the French term is, proceeded to act the history of the Acts of the Apostles ; and some of these plays, written in very indifferent French verse, are still extant. Mysteries and Moralities next followed, much in the same manner as in England. The rage for all sorts of

theatrical representation in France was so great, that the priests found it necessary to alter the hour of vesper prayers to enable the people to attend both.

George. I think it would have been as well if they had altered the time of the plays to suit the prayers.

Mrs. M. The plays were considered as a species of religious observance. They were represented on Sundays and on saints' days. They commenced at one o'clock at noon, and lasted about four hours; and the price of admittance for each person was two sous.

Mary. I am sure that was little enough.

Mrs. M. If we estimate the value of two sous at the time we are speaking of, you will find it was a high price for admittance to a play.

Richard. I thought a sou was only equal to our English halfpenny; and surely a penny was not much.

Mrs. M. There is an old couplet which runs thus—

The real worth of any thing
Is just as much as it will bring;

and in the time of Charles VI. money in France was so scarce, that a sou went much farther than it does now. A sou a day was considered as very good pay for a workman; and from two to three sous was the price of a good pair of shoes.

Richard. Then, after all, it cost at least as much to go to the play then, as it costs us now.

Mrs. M. It is commonly asserted that cards were invented about this time in France; but some authors suppose that they had been known long before, and that they were derived, through the Moors, from the East. At any rate, we first hear of them in France in this reign, when they were employed to divert the melancholy of the king, during some of the less violent paroxysms of his disorder. It is very singular that no change should have taken place since in their form or figure. The cards which are played with now resemble, in all respects, those which were used to amuse Charles VI.

Richard. I wonder if there was any meaning in the figures on the cards, or if they were only meant to distinguish one from another.

Mrs. M. At the time they were invented they were intended to convey a distinct meaning, the four suits being designed to represent the four classes of people; the churchmen, the military, the class of artificers, and the peasantry.

Mary. I cannot comprehend how hearts, spades, diamonds, and clubs can express all that.

Mrs. M. You shall hear. By the hearts were meant the ecclesiastics—the French word is *gens de cœur*, or choirman; and *cœur* is, as I need not tell you, French for heart. By the spades, which are, in fact, intended to represent pike-heads, are

meant the nobles or military. By the square stones, or tiles, which we call diamonds, but which the French call *carreaux*, was intended the artificers' class; and, lastly, the suit which we call clubs, but which is, after all, a leaf of trefoil, or clover, was meant to represent the peasantry.

George. This is really something quite new to me, and very diverting.

Mrs. M. The French have also particular names for each of the twelve court cards. The names of the four kings are David, Alexander, Cæsar, and Charles; the four queens are Argine, Esther, Judith, and Pallas; the knaves, or knights, as the French called them, are Oger the Dane, Lancelot, La Hire, and Hector de Galard—I must not forget a story relating to this reign, which I think will interest you very much, particularly if you have not forgot the play you went to see last year, called "The Forest of Bondi, or Dog of Montargis."

George. O! I remember it very well; for I shall never forget the dear dog Carlo, and all his clever tricks! how he trotted along, carrying the lantern to show the place where the body of his murdered master was hid!

Mrs. M. The circumstance from which the play is taken occurred in the reign of Charles VI., and is briefly this. A man, named Aubri de Montdidier, was murdered in the Forest of Bondi, not far from Paris, by Macaire, his professed and mortal

enemy, who concealed the body under a tree, and returned to Paris, satisfied that there had been no witnesses of the deed. In that he was mistaken; for besides the watchful eye which witnesseth every deed, Aubri's faithful dog had observed the whole transaction, and laid himself down on his master's grave, never leaving the spot, except to go in search of food. For this purpose he generally repaired to Paris, to the house of his late master's most intimate friend. Here he usually obtained food, and as soon as he was satisfied, he instantly returned to the forest. The friend, surprised at this singular appearance and disappearance of the dog, resolved one day to follow him: he did so; and as soon as they had arrived at the tree, under which Aubri had been buried, the dog scratched away the earth, and disclosed his master's murdered body. From this time the dog attached himself to the friend, and would never quit him. It was observed, that whenever he saw Macaire he always growled at him, flew at him, and showed every sign of anger, insomuch that Macaire was suspected to be the murderer; and, according to the custom at that time, of deciding upon a man's guilt or innocence by a trial at arms, Macaire was sentenced to a trial by combat with the dog.

George. A duel between a man and a dog! And pray what weapons were they to fight with?

Mrs. M. The dog had his natural weapons of claws and teeth; besides which he had the advan-

tage of a tub to retire to when he was weary. The man was only permitted to have a stick and a shield. The combat took place at Paris, in the Ile Notre Dame, amidst an immense concourse of people. It lasted so long that Macaire fainted through fatigue, and when he came to himself confessed his crime. A picture representing this singular combat was for a long time preserved in the castle of Montargis ; and I can show you a little sketch of some of the principal figures.

Mary. I can understand how the real dog could, from love of his dead master, do what he did ; but I cannot understand how the dog in the play can be made to do all these things, such as ringing the bell to call up the people of the inn, and all the rest.

Mrs. M. Dogs are surprisingly tractable animals, and may be taught to do many things that seem against their natures ; but in regard to the ringing the bell, I believe I can let you into a little secret about it. In training the dog to act the part, a sausage is hung at the end of the bell-string, and, in jumping up to get at the sausage, the dog rings the bell ; and in time he learns to pull the string without requiring the bribe.

George. Well, I am glad the poor fellow is taught his lesson by bribery, and not by blows.

Mrs. M. Before we leave off, I have one more circumstance to mention. There appeared in Germany, in the early part of the 15th century, certain

bands of vagabonds, without religion, without laws, without a country. They had tawny faces, and spoke a kind of gibberish, which was peculiar to themselves; stealing and telling fortunes seemed to be their only business. Do you think you can guess who these people were?

George. I think they must have been gipsies.

Mrs. M. So Mezerai thought; for he says, “Ce sont, à mon avis, ceux que l’on appelle en France Bohémiens et Egyptiens.”

Richard. And who were they in reality?

Mrs. M. Nothing is known with any certainty respecting their origin. The common notion is that they were natives of Egypt, who, refusing to submit to the Turkish yoke, abandoned their country, and have ever since wandered about in various parts of the world a separate and distinct people.



Citizens of Paris in the reign of Charles VI.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHARLES VII., SURNAMED LE VICTORIEUX.

[Years after Christ 1422—1461.]



PHILIP THE BOLD, JOHN THE FEARLESS, PHILIP THE GOOD,
Dukes of Burgundy.

THE dauphin was at Château d'Espailly, near Auvergne, when he first heard of his father's death. He immediately put on mourning; but the next day he clothed himself in scarlet and was proclaimed king by the princes and nobles who formed his little court. Charles was, at that time, about twenty years old. He possessed excellent abilities, and a good heart, and occasionally acted with

vigour; but he commonly suffered indolence and love of pleasure to stifle all his better qualities.

His countrymen have given him the pompous title of *the victorious*, because in his time the English were driven out of France; but he was, properly speaking, a spectator, rather than an actor, in the emancipation of his country; and he much more deserves the name which I have sometimes seen given to him, of "*the well served*."

Rheims, at Charles's accession, was in the possession of the English; consequently he could not be consecrated there as his predecessors had been. He was, therefore, crowned at Poitiers, and began his reign under every possible discouragement. He was so poor that he had little else but promises to bestow upon his followers; but his affability and his grateful disposition served him at this time instead of wealth, and procured him many faithful and zealous friends. His agreeable manners could not, however, entirely supply the place of money; for we are told, that being in want of some boots, he was obliged to go without them, the shoemaker refusing to let him have them unless they were paid for.

The regent Bedford, and some of Henry's valiant captains, were very active in the field, and the English were becoming every day more and more masters of the country. Orleans was now the last remaining town of importance which Charles pos-

essed; and, in 1428, the English forces, commanded by the earl of Salisbury, laid siege to it.

Salisbury surrounded the town by a great number of towers, and put good garrisons into each; but, according to the imperfect tactics of those times, he left many unguarded places between the towers, which enabled the count of Dunois, who commanded Charles's troops, to bring succours from time to time into the town. By this means the garrison was enabled to hold out many months, during which time the brave Salisbury was slain, and was succeeded in his command by the earl of Suffolk. At the approach of Lent the English regent sent to the English army a large supply of salted herrings under a strong escort. The French sallied out of the town to attack the escort, but were driven back again with great loss. This battle was called the battle of the *herrings*, and the loss of it reduced the French to despair. They actually began to treat for a surrender; but that they might not fall into the hands of the English, they offered to yield up their city to the duke of Burgundy. To this, however, the regent would not consent, and demanded "if it was reasonable that he should beat the bush for the duke of Burgundy to catch the hare?"

The affairs of Charles were now reduced to the lowest ebb, and he was prepared, as soon as Orleans, which he considered as the main prop of his

fortunes, should have fallen, to retire into Dauphiné as a last retreat. His fortunes were, however, unexpectedly retrieved by one of the most singular occurrences in history. You will have already guessed that this singular occurrence was the appearance of Joan of Arc, who is known also by the name of the Maid of Orleans.

This girl was the daughter of a peasant of Domremy sur le Meuse, and by the strength of dreams and, as she fancied, of apparitions of saints and angels, she believed herself divinely commissioned to rescue her fallen country. She obtained an interview with the king, and told him that she was destined to deliver Orleans from the English, and to take him to Rheims to be crowned. Some of the courtiers thought her an insane enthusiast; but Charles, either because he was willing to cling to a last hope, or else because he was really convinced that she spoke by divine authority, granted her request that he would send her with an escort to Orleans. On her arrival there her presence inspired the garrison with fresh courage. She headed the troops in several sorties, in which they were always successful. The English soldiers could not exert themselves when she appeared. Believing that she was assisted by supernatural powers, they felt a superstitious dread of her, and so many of them fled from the army on that account, that a proclamation was issued in England to apprehend every soldier who deserted from France "for feare

of the mayde." At last the English, on May 29, 1429, found themselves obliged to raise the siege of Orleans.

Joan having fulfilled what she believed was the first part of her mission, was now desirous to accomplish the second part, which was that of conducting the king to Rheims. In this also she succeeded, and he was consecrated by the archbishop of Rheims, July 7. It was now Joan's wish to resign her military command, and to return to her native obscurity; but this the king, having found her so necessary to his success, would not permit.

But this very success was poor Joan's ruin; for the French officers became jealous of her fame, and ashamed that a woman should have performed greater exploits than themselves. In a sortie from the town of Compeigne she was abandoned by her companions, who, at the approach of the enemy, retired into the town and closed the gates upon her, thus leaving her alone amidst the enemy. She was pulled from her horse by a gentleman of Picardy: he relinquished her to John of Luxemburg, the Burgundian general, who for a large sum of money gave her up to the regent.

Joan, by every law of honour and humanity, ought to have been considered and treated as a prisoner of war; but the regent chose to regard her as a sorceress and heretic. He obliged those members of the university of Paris who still re-

mained in that city to bring her to trial for these offences, and they and several bishops and doctors, who were her judges, condemned her to perpetual captivity. But this the regent deemed too mild a punishment, and he found means to have it changed for one more severe. Joan, by the articles of her condemnation, was forbidden ever again to wear the habit of a man; and Bedford, in the cruel hope that she would not be able to resist the temptation of dressing herself in armour, caused a complete suit to be hung up in her cell. Poor Joan fell into the snare, and her barbarous persecutors having detected her with the armour on, pronounced her worthy of death, and condemned her to be burnt alive. The sentence was executed May 30, 1431, in the market-place of Rouen. When at the stake, Joan exclaimed aloud that the hand of God was raised against the English, and that he would not only drive them out of France, but that his vengeance would also pursue them in their own country. And if we reflect on the miseries which the English experienced after their expulsion from France, in the wars of the White and Red Roses, we may well think that her words were fully verified.

At all events, her death has fallen heavy on all who were concerned in it. It is the "one great blot" in the otherwise spotless character of Bedford, the disgrace of her countrymen and judges who sanctioned it, and of Charles who made no

effort to save her. Mezerai says, that the judgments of God fell on her judges, and that they all died violent and sudden deaths. I cannot pretend to say how far this is true, but it is certain that the bishop of Lisieux, one of her judges, was so conscious of his crime, that he founded a chapel at Lisieux in expiation of it. The king, who had shown his gratitude to Joan in her lifetime by ennobling her and her family, did tardy justice twenty-four years after her death to her memory, by causing the process of her condemnation to be burnt before a large assembly of prelates and nobles at Rouen.

This history of poor Joan of Arc has led me on to anticipate the order of time, and to neglect in their proper place one or two particulars I ought to have mentioned.

Amongst other things, I ought to have said that Charles contrived, in 1424, to attach the duke of Bretagne, a weak and vacillating man, to his interest, by making his brother, Arthur of Bretagne, count of Richemont, constable of France. This man had many great and fine qualities, and served the king with a most faithful attachment; but his zeal for his master's service often carried him farther than was just or politic.

Charles had many very brave men in his service. Amongst those who are most frequently named in history are the count of Dunoise, La Hire, and Saintraille; but although they performed many valiant exploits, they were none of them endowed

with great military talents; and it was said of Charles, that he had many brave captains, but no generals. He himself might have been a good general if he had pleased, and whenever he exerted himself displayed vigour and ability. But his habitual indolence made these exertions very rare; and although the war was still kept up between him and the English, it was conducted without much activity on either side.

The torpor on the part of the English was not the fault of the regent. He did all he could, but he could not counteract the ill consequences of a quarrel which had taken place between his brother the duke of Gloucester, and the duke of Burgundy, which caused for a time a coolness on the part of Burgundy towards the English. The hearts of the French also, although they might dissemble their sentiments for fear of the English arms, were all inclining towards their own legitimate sovereign. To excite some feeling in favour of the young king of England (Henry VI.), the regent had him brought to France and crowned a second time in Paris. But the pageant had no other effect than to make the Parisians sigh the more for their own monarch.

In 1435 the tide turned in their favour. The duke of Burgundy deserted the English, and made a separate peace with Charles. This peace, which is called the peace of Arras, was celebrated throughout France with the most frantic expressions of joy. To the regent, Bedford, it occasioned, on the

other hand, so much vexation as to be the cause of his death.

The English affairs rapidly declined from this time. The dukes of York and Somerset, who were successively regents of France, wanted the ability to stem the torrent that ran strongly against them; and when the civil-wars broke out in England, the contending parties were too much occupied at home to be able to pay attention to the affairs in France.

Paris was almost the first town that threw off the English yoke; and on Nov. 4, 1437, Charles made his public entry into his capital, after a banishment of seventeen years.

The year 1438 is memorable on account of a famine, followed by a pestilence, which caused so great a mortality in Paris and in the environs, that the wolves roamed about the nearly depopulated streets, and some children were carried off by them.

In 1440 a short truce was agreed on between the English and the French. Charles would now have given himself up to the enjoyment of his gardens (of which he was very fond), and of his other quiet amusements, had not his tranquillity and happiness been destroyed by the conduct of his eldest son. This young prince (afterwards Louis XI.) had early shown a disobedient and malignant temper. When not more than sixteen years of age, he had joined some discontented nobles in a conspiracy against the king. Charles forgave him for this offence on account of his youth, and received him into his favour as before. But Louis

made an undutiful and ungrateful return to his indulgent father. He behaved insolently to his favourites, and often displeased them by the violence of his temper. When he was about twenty-two years old, he conceived an enmity to some person about the court, whom he engaged the count de Dammartin to assassinate. Dammartin, either because he had never seriously intended to commit the deed, or else because he afterwards repented of his engagement, refused to perpetrate the crime. These circumstances coming to the knowledge of the king, he sent for his son, and most severely reprimanded him for his wickedness. The dauphin, to exculpate himself, threw the whole blame on Dammartin, who denied the charge, and offered to vindicate his honour by single combat with any gentleman of the dauphin's household. The king, knowing too well the evil dispositions of his son, felt persuaded of his guilt, and banished him to Dauphiné, forbidding him to appear again in his presence for four months.

At the expiration of that time, Charles expected to have seen him again, and that he would have returned penitent and subdued. But Louis, on the contrary, refused to return, and, establishing himself in Dauphiné, set himself up as his own master. He loaded the people with taxes, and treated them with the utmost tyranny. His conduct becoming insupportable, the king sent Dammartin with orders to arrest him, and bring him to Paris. But Louis,

having previous notice of his coming, fled to the duke of Burgundy, who received him with the greatest kindness, gave him money for his expenses, and assigned him the castle of Genappe, near Brussels, for his residence. Here he remained till his father's death, obstinately resisting every invitation to return, and repaying the kindness of the duke of Burgundy by sowing dissensions between him and the count de Charolois, his only son.

In the mean time the truce with England had been broken. The war was renewed in 1448, and always to the disadvantage of the English. Talbot, who alone remained of all Henry's brave warriors, made a last effort to redeem the honour of England. He and his son were both slain in 1453, near Chatillon. This defeat was followed by the complete ruin of the English, and soon nothing remained to them of all their boasted conquests in France except the town of Calais.

Charles, though thus at last restored to the dominions of his ancestors, had little satisfaction in this prosperous situation of his affairs. His son, to strengthen himself still more against his father, had allied himself with the duke of Savoy, and had married his daughter; a step which was highly displeasing to Charles. Louis was also suspected (but I believe unjustly) of having caused the death of his father's mistress, Agnes Sorel, by means of poison. He was suspected also of designs on the life of his father and to have bribed his servants to

give him poison in his food. The unhappy monarch, under this apprehension, refused all nourishment; and when, at last, he was prevailed to take some, it was too late to save his life. He died July 22, 1461. He was fifty-nine years old, and had reigned thirty-nine years. He married Mary of Anjou, daughter of Louis II., titular king of Naples, and had two sons and four daughters:

Louis, who succeeded him;

Charles, duke of Berri;

Joland, married the duke of Savoy;

Catherine, married the count of Charolois;

Jane, married the duke de Bourbon;

Magdelain, married the count de Foix.

In 1438 Charles called an assembly of his clergy at Bourges. In this assembly the Gallican church threw off much of its dependence on the pope.

Charles, finding that there was a great want of infantry in France, ordered that each village throughout the kingdom should furnish and pay a foot archer, who should be free from all taxes and subsidies. This corps, which amounted to about 22,000 men, was called the *Franc Archers*. Charles also established the *Companies of Ordinance*, which formed a body of about 9000 cavalry, and were the foundation of the French regular army.

In 1440 the duke of Orleans returned from his long captivity in England. He obtained his release chiefly by the good offices of the duke of Burgundy, who, being desirous to terminate the long

feud between their families, assisted him in paying his ransom. When the duke of Orleans regained his liberty, he was received with great honour by the duke of Burgundy in his town of Gravelines. These two princes lived ever after in perfect friendship. The duke of Orleans's first wife being dead, the duke of Burgundy gave him his niece in marriage, by whom he had a son, who was afterwards Louis XII.

The constable of France, Arthur of Bretagne, died a few years before the king his master. Some years before his death, he became, by the deaths of his brother and of his nephew, duke of Bretagne; but he would never suffer himself to be called duke of Bretagne; preferring always the title of constable of France, and saying, "that in his old age he would be called by that title only which had given lustre to his youth. On his death the dukedom of Bretagne devolved on Francis, the son of his younger brother.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XXII.

Mary. Pray, mamma, who was that Agnes Sorel, who was such a favourite with the king?

Mrs. Markham. She was a lady of great beauty and accomplishments, and much celebrated by the

French poets and historians, because she employed the influence she possessed over Charles, to rouse him from his natural indolence, and to urge him to exert himself for the recovery of his dominions.

Mary. Then she must have been a very good woman.

Mrs. M. She had some redeeming virtues with some very great faults. She was buried at Jumieges in Normandy, whese a splendid monument was raised over her grave, in which she was represented in a kneeling posture, with her heart in her hand, which she was offering to the Virgin. This monument was destroyed in some religious disturbances, and its place was supplied by a plain slab of black marble, which is still in existence, as the threshold stone to a house at Rouen. Agnes is sometimes called the Lady of Beauté, not because of her great personal attractions, but on account of a castle so called, which the king gave her.

Mary. How glad that poor duke of Orleans must have been when he got his liberty again! I hope they did not keep him shut up in a prison all those twenty-five years in England?

Mrs. M. Great part of that time he passed at Groombridge, not far from Tunbridge, in the custody of Richard Waller, an English gentleman. Waller had found the duke after the battle of Agincourt, lying amongst the slain, and, perceiving some life in him, carried him to Henry, who, as a

reward for his care, appointed him guardian to the royal prisoner.

Mary. But was Groomsbridge a prison?

Mrs. M. No, my dear; it was Mr. Waller's own house. It is still standing, and I have been told that a part of it was built under the directions of the duke. He also contributed to the repairs of the neighbouring church of Speldhurst, where his arms may still be seen over the porch.

Mary. I am glad he had such pleasant employments to amuse himself with.

Mrs. M. He was also able to amuse himself with writing poetry. I will show you a sonnet on Spring, which is said to have been written by him.

LE PRINTEMPS.

Le Temps a laissie son menteau
De vent, de froidure, et de pluye;
Et s'est vestu de broderye
De soleil riant, cler et beau.

Il n'y a beste, ne oyseau,
Qui en son jargon ne chante et crye:
Le Temps a laissie son menteau
De vent, de froidure, et de pluye.

Riviere, fontaine, et ruisseau,
Portent en livrée jolie
Gouttes d'argent, d'orfèvrerie:
Chascun s'abille de nouveau,
Le Temps a laissie son menteau.

Richard. Many of the words are spelt so dif-

ferently from modern French, that I am not quite sure whether I understand it perfectly. I wish you would be so good as to translate it for us.

Mrs. M. I will read you a translation, which I copied from a magazine.

The Time hath laid his mantle by
Of wind and rain and icy chill,
And dons a rich embroidery
Of sun-light pour'd on lake and hill.

No beast or bird, in earth or sky,
Whose voice doth not with gladness thrill;
For Time hath laid his mantle by
Of wind and rain and icy chill.

River and fountain, brook and rill,
Bespangled o'er with livery gay
Of silver droplets, wind their way:
All in their new apparel vie,
For Time hath laid his mantle by.

Richard. Pray, can you tell us what became of that bad queen Isabella of Bavaria?

Mrs. M. She seems to have been detained in a sort of custody by the English at Paris, who treated her with contempt and neglect. Her hatred of her son continued unabated to the end of her life, which, in fact, was terminated by the excess of her vexation at seeing him acquire possession of his kingdom. A monument was erected over her, in which, instead of the dog which it was customary to place at the feet of ladies in the monuments of those times, the sculptor substituted the figure of

a wolf, as an emblem of her cruel and rapacious disposition.

George. By the bye, mamma, that was very shocking about the wolves eating up the children in the streets of Paris. Are there any wolves in France now?

Mrs. M. I understand there are; but they no longer range about the country in packs as they did formerly. They are only to be seen in unfrequented places, and seldom more than two or three at a time.

Mary. I should be afraid to live in France for fear of the wolves.

Mrs. M. A gentleman, who has lived a good deal in Touraine, told me, that he had frequently seen a solitary wolf in his walks; but that he never met with one that showed an inclination to attack him; at the sight of him they commonly slunk away into the nearest thicket.

George. I suppose that wolves know by instinct that their strength is in numbers.

Mrs. M. I have just recollected that I omitted to mention in its proper place, the famous council of Constance, which, although it has no immediate connection with the history of France, is yet so important an event, that I ought not to have passed it over.

Richard. Then will you be so good as to give us some account of it now?

Mrs. M. I must go back to the year 1377,

when pope Gregory XI. removed the papal see from Avignon back to Rome. He died in the following year, and after his death there was a great schism amongst the cardinals, who could not agree in the choice of the new pontiff. Those who were in the interests of Rome wished to elect a pope who would remain at Rome; while, on the contrary, those who were in the interests of France, wished to bring back the papal see to Avignon.

George. And which got the better?

Mrs. M. I can scarcely tell you. As the two parties could not agree in naming the same pope, they both chose one of their own, so that there were two popes. This schism lasted forty years, and caused continual disturbances throughout Italy. At last, there were three popes all at one time, John XXIII., Gregory XII., and Benedict XIII. The emperor Sigismond, who was very anxious to restore the peace of Italy, obliged John, much against his will, to summon a council at Constance, for the three purposes of terminating the schism, of reforming the church, and of extirpating heresy. This council met on the feast of All Saints, 1414, and the emperor compelled John to make a public declaration, that he would resign his dignity, provided his two rivals would do the same. John, however, had no intention of keeping his word, but he dissimulated, for fear of the emperor, who kept him as a kind of prisoner. He now bitterly repented having come to Constance, and resolved

to get away as soon as he could. But this, as the town was full of Sigismond's partisans, was no easy matter. At last, the duke of Austria, who was his friend, contrived to favour his escape, by proclaiming a tournament, during the bustle of which the pope got away in the disguise of a postilion.

Mary. O! what a comical figure he must have made.

Mrs. M. Particularly if he was dressed like this figure of a French postilion* in the time of Charles VI. But to go on with my story. The emperor was very angry with the duke of Austria for assisting John in his escape; he laid him under the ban of the empire, and would forgive him only on condition that he gave up the fugitive pope. John was suspended from his pontifical powers, and imprisoned for about three years at Heidelberg, at the end of which time he was released on his consenting to acknowledge Martin V., who had been elected pope by the members of the council. Thus in 1417 an end was happily put to the schism which had so long embroiled Italy, and the more happily, because Martin was a peace-making, good man.

Richard. This council of Constance managed the affair of the schism very well. Pray, what was done in regard to heresy and the reformation of the church?

* See the Vignette at the end of this Conversation.

Mrs. M. I believe nothing was done towards reforming the church; but the members of the council thought they did a great deal towards extirpating heresy by burning John Huss and Jerome of Prague, who were followers of the doctrines of Wickliffe. The death of Huss seemed the more shocking, because he had been induced to obey a summons to attend the council under promise of the emperor's protection; but when he came there, Sigismond withdrew his protection, and suffered him to be given up to his persecutors.

Richard. And was Jerome of Prague betrayed in the same manner?

Mrs. M. He had not been summoned to the council; but hearing of his friend's arrest, he came to Constance with a view to assist and comfort him. Being here intimidated by the violent spirit which he found raging against their opinions, he endeavoured to fly from the town; but he was overtaken and brought back in chains, and confined for nearly a year in a dark dungeon. He was then brought to trial, found guilty, and condemned to be burnt alive. Poggio Bracciolini, a learned Italian, who was present at his trial and death, has left us a very interesting account of his death in a letter to a friend.

Richard. How I should like to see that letter!

Mrs. M. You may read it in Mr. Shepherd's life of Poggio. In the mean time I can give you some extracts from it.

—— “I must confess,” says he, speaking of Jerome’s appearance at his trial, “that I never saw any one who in pleading a cause, especially a cause on the issue of which his own life depended, approached nearer to that standard of ancient eloquence which we so much admire. It was astonishing to witness with what choice of words, with what closeness of argument, he replied to his adversaries.—It is a wonderful instance of his memory, that though he had been confined three hundred and forty days in a dark dungeon, where it was impossible for him to read, and where he must have daily suffered from the utmost anxiety of mind, yet he quoted so many learned writers in defence of his opinions, and supported his sentiments by the authority of so many doctors of the church, that any one would have been led to believe that he had devoted all the time of his imprisonment to the peaceful and undisturbed study of philosophy. His voice was sweet, clear, and sonorous : his action dignified, and well adapted either to express indignation or to excite compassion, which, however, he neither wished nor asked for ; he stood undaunted and intrepid, not merely contemning, but, like another Cato, longing for death : he was a man worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance.”

—— “When he arrived at the place of execution, he stripped himself of his garments, and knelt down before the stake, to which he was soon

after tied by wet ropes and a chain; then great pieces of wood, intermixed with straw, were piled as high as his breast. When fire was set to the pile he began to sing a hymn, which was scarcely interrupted by the smoke and flame. I must not omit a striking instance, which shows the firmness of his mind. When the executioner was about to apply the fire behind him, that he might not see it, he said ‘Come this way and kindle it in my sight; for, if I had been afraid of it, I should never have come to this place.’”

George. I am very glad you remembered to tell us about the council of Constance, for I should have been sorry not to have heard this letter.

Mrs. M. I must not forget another very memorable event, the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, which took place in the year 1453. The empire of the East had been so much encroached upon by these overwhelming invaders, that at last it was reduced to little more than the city of Constantinople, which the Turks made many efforts to gain. But the city being well defended, and having a fine harbour, by which supplies could readily be introduced, held out successfully during many attacks. At last, in the month of April, 1453, the sultan Mahommed II. brought an immense force to Constantinople, and blockaded it by sea and land. The emperor Constantine Paleologus, being full of youthful courage, was nothing daunted, and refused many offers from Mahommed

to give up his city on reasonable terms. After some time a mutiny arose in the Turkish army, and the sultan found that the best way to pacify his soldiers was to lead them to the immediate assault of the city, with the promise that if they took it, it should be given up to plunder during three days. The next morning (May 29) as soon as it was daybreak, the Turks rushed to the walls like so many beasts of prey. The Greeks defended themselves with the valour of desperation; but they were so much outnumbered by the assailants, (who as soon as one party of troops was slain could supply their places with others,) that, overpowered by fatigue, they were at last obliged to give way. The Turks broke into the city; and I need not pain you with describing the scenes which followed during those dreadful three days of carnage and rapine. At the end of that time the sultan made his triumphant entry, and Constantinople has, as you know, ever since been the capital of the Turkish empire.

George. I wonder all the Christian people in the world did not rise in a body and drive out those infidel Turks.

Mrs. M. The capture of Constantinople, although a most calamitous event, was yet productive of some advantages to the rest of Europe.

Richard. I cannot comprehend what good it could possibly do them.

Mrs. M. The good it produced was by the

settling in Italy, France, and other countries, of several learned men who fled from Constantinople, and engaged in teaching the Greek language, and many of the liberal sciences. The good effects of this increase of knowledge soon began to show itself by an increase of civilization and of humanity, amongst people who had till then been taught to consider cruelty as no crime, and ignorance as no misfortune.

Mary. And pray, mamma, what became of the courageous young emperor?

Mrs. M. It is not exactly known whether he was slain by the Turks, or squeezed to death by the press of people in trying to escape by one of the gates. Theodore Paleologus, a descendant of this family, found his way into Cornwall, and his tomb may still be seen in a village church near Callington.

George. Do you continue to take any of your curious stories out of Froissart's chronicles?

Mrs. M. The chronicles of Froissart come down no later than the year 1400. But there is what may be considered a continuation of them, or at least a continuation of the history, by Monstrelet, a gentleman of Picardy, who, as he tells us, "wished to avoid indolence by writing down the events of his time.

George. And is his book entertaining?

Mrs. M. His chronicles are for the most part very dull and dry; but here and there I have found

an amusing passage. As I perceive that Mary takes a great interest in the various revolutions of dress, she shall hear what he says on that subject.

“In the year 1461, the ladies laid aside their long trains to their gowns, and in lieu of them had deep borders of furs of minever, martin, and others, or of velvet and various articles of a great breadth. They also wore hoods on their heads of a circular form, half an ell or three quarters high, gradually tapering to the top. Some had them not so high, with handkerchiefs wreathed round them, the corners hanging down to the ground. They also wore silken girdles of a greater breadth than formerly, with the richest shoes; with golden necklaces much more trimly decked in divers fashions than they had been accustomed to wear them. At the same time the men wore shorter jackets than usual, after the manner in which people are wont to dress monkeys, which was a very indecent and impudent thing. The sleeves of their outward dress and jackets were slashed, to show their wide white shirts.

“Their hair was so long that it covered their eyes and face, and on their heads they had cloth bonnets of a quarter of an ell in height.

“Knights and squires, indifferently, wore the most sumptuous golden chains. Even the very varlets had jackets of silk, satin or velvet; and almost all, especially at the courts of princes, wore peaks at their shoes of a quarter of an ell in length.

They had also under their jackets stuffings at the shoulders to make them appear broad, which is a vanity, and perchance displeasing to God.



A French postilion of the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOUIS XI.

[Years after Christ, 1461—1483.]



Louis XI. and an Archer of his Guard.

LOUIS was in Brabant when he heard of his father's death; and lest any attempt should be made to place his younger brother on the throne, he instantly mounted his horse, and, accompanied by the duke of Burgundy, and his son Charles count of Charolois, hastened to Rheims, where he was crowned by the archbishop.

Louis was at this time in the thirty-ninth year of his age. He had considerable shrewdness and penetration, but every faculty of his mind was perverted by being directed to unworthy ends. He was cruel, malignant, and ungrateful, and was never known to forgive an injury or repay a kindness, unless, indeed, he had some selfish object to gain by it. He was, moreover, so excessively cunning and artful, that his whole life was one continued act of deceit. He was avaricious by nature, but often prodigal through policy, saving even to parsimony in his personal expenses, especially in his dress, which commonly consisted of a coarse short jacket, but liberal in his presents (which might, indeed, more properly be called bribes) to persons whose services he could in no other way secure. To sum up his character, he was a stranger to every kindly feeling and natural affection; and never was there a man more feared and distrusted by his contemporaries, and more hated and despised by posterity.

From Rheims Louis proceeded directly to Paris, accompanied by a train of thirteen to fourteen thousand soldiers, which effectually secured him a good reception. The first act of his government was to deprive his brother of every thing his father had given him, excepting the county of Berri. He dismissed his father's ministers, and turned off all the officers of the household, and replaced them by men of low extraction and mean habits, who, he

thought, would be more subservient to his will than he could expect persons of higher station to be.

These measures excited the indignation of the nobles, and a league, called the League of the Public Good, was formed against the king, at the head of which were the dukes of Berri and Bretagne. The count of Charolois also joined this confederacy. The professed friendship between him and Louis was now turned to deadly hatred, the warm and impetuous nature of the count having been worked up to the highest pitch of resentment against the heartless, ungrateful king, who, forgetting all his obligations to the house of Burgundy, now took every opportunity to weaken and injure it.

Amongst other provocations he had secretly tampered with the duke's ministers for the restitution of Abbeville, Amiens, Corbie, and Saint Quentin, four towns on the Somme, which had been ceded to the duke of Burgundy by Charles VII. at the treaty of Arras.

The confederates agreed to assemble their forces before Paris. The fiery and impatient Charolois was the first in the field, and entered France with a powerful force, before his allies were in readiness to join him. After waiting for them ten or twelve days in the neighbourhood of Paris, he crossed the Seine, and advanced to meet the army of the duke of Bretagne.

The king, who had been in the Bourbonnois,

quelling a disturbance, was at this time hastening to Paris, with the intention of throwing himself into the city before the confederates should have joined their forces. His army and that of the Burgundians met unexpectedly near Monthéri, and although neither party wished an encounter at that moment, yet they found themselves so near together that they could not avoid it. The battle took place July 16, 1465. Both Charles and Louis (who on all necessary occasions could master his natural timidity) showed great bravery, and the victory was so undecided that both parties claimed it. Louis, whose main object was to reach Paris, did not stay to follow up any advantage he might have gained, and left Charolois master of the field. This day, as Philip de Comines tells us in his memoirs, was an unfortunate one for Burgundy; for Charolois was so much elated with his own prowess, that from that day forth his mind was wholly turned to military affairs, and he thought of nothing but of wars and conquest, by which he brought much misery on his people, and, in the end, destruction on himself.

Louis accomplished his object of getting into Paris, and now used every art to gain the affections of the Parisians, who he feared might be seduced by the allies to open their gates to them. Doing a violence to his nature, he affected great respect for the citizens, and complied with their wishes in appointing a council of eighteen persons chosen

from amongst the principal citizens, and the members of the parliament and the university, and promised to do nothing without their advice. He also proclaimed a reduction of the taxes: but all this lasted only whilst the danger did; when that no longer existed, he revoked these beneficial acts, and persecuted those persons with unremitting malevolence at whose suggestions he had been induced to agree to them.

Not long after the battle of Montlheri, the dukes of Berri and Bretagne, with the rest of the confederates, joined Charolois. Their army, which amounted to 100,000 men, might have been very formidable to Louis, if they had all acted in unison. But amongst so many chiefs there was no leader; and although they encamped close to Paris, they let three weeks slip by without doing any thing of importance. In the mean time Louis had quitted Paris to procure reinforcements, and had re-entered it again. While each party was expecting that a decisive blow would be struck, Louis who feared to trust to the event of a battle, sought to dissolve, by policy, this formidable confederacy. It is said, that he pursued this line of conduct by the advice of his friend and ally, Francis Sforza, the usurping duke of Milan, who exhorted him to break the league, at whatever cost, by granting to each of the chiefs whatever he demanded.

Louis accordingly accomplished this great object, and at little more expense than that of a few pro-

mises, and with no other loss than that of his honour; a loss which he little regarded. He made a treaty with the confederates, called the treaty of Conflans, by which the disputed towns on the Somme were to remain to Burgundy; the duke of Berri was to have Normandy, and all the other malcontents were also satisfied,—well pleased in believing, that in securing their own interests, they had done all that was required by *the league of the public good*. They did not, however, gain so much as they had reckoned upon; the crafty king finding various means to evade the fulfilment of his promises.

The duke of Berri had no sooner taken possession of Normandy, than he was driven out of it by his brother, and compelled to take refuge in the court of the duke of Bretagne, who, by giving him that refuge, drew on himself the lasting resentment of the vindictive king.

In 1467, Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, died. The count of Charolois, who was surnamed Charles the Bold, succeeded to his vast possessions, but not to his wisdom and prudence. Charles was passionate and indiscreet to the last degree: he was also brave and generous; but as he was never swayed by reason, both his good and his bad qualities were always in extremes.

On succeeding to the dukedom he was for some time fully occupied in quelling some disturbances amongst his Flemish subjects; but as soon as his

affairs were a little settled in that quarter, he set himself to revenge the cause of his friend and ally, the duke of Berri, Louis's ill-treatment of whom he violently resented. Louis, believing himself more equal to cope with his ardent and hot-headed antagonist in the cabinet than in the field, and having great confidence in his own powers of persuasion, was desirous of a personal conference with him.

A meeting was accordingly agreed upon, which was to take place in October 1468, at Peronne, a town on the Somme, belonging to the duke of Burgundy.

Louis, to make a display of his entire confidence in the duke's honour, repaired to Peronne, accompanied only by the cardinal de Balue, the count de Saint Pol, and a few other lords. On entering the town he was greatly alarmed to find there several French noblemen whom he had banished, and others whom he knew to be his enemies, and he requested of the duke that, for his greater security, he might be lodged in the castle.

A short time before Louis came to Peronne, he had sent some of his emissaries to foment the disturbances in Flanders, and, from some unaccountable oversight, he had either forgotten to countermand these orders, or else had supposed that his machinations would not take immediate effect. It, however, happened, that at the very moment when he was now at Peronne, using all his arts to cajole the duke of Burgundy, his agents

succeeded in exciting the people of Liege to open rebellion against their sovereign.

The news of this revolt soon reached Peronne, and the discovery of the king's treacherous dealing threw Charles into the most fearful transports of rage. He instantly ordered the gates of the castle to be closed and strictly guarded, thus making the king a prisoner, and permitting only a few of his personal attendants to have access to him. Thus the artful and perfidious Louis saw himself completely entangled in a net of his own contriving. He became a prey to the most painful reflections and bitter regrets; not, I fear, regrets at his own perfidy and wickedness, but at the folly and want of forethought which had led him thus to put himself in the power of a justly irritated enemy. To add to his uneasy reflections, he saw himself lodged at the foot of the tower in which Charles the Simple had formerly been confined, and where he died, as was supposed, by poison.

Louis, however, did not let his presence of mind forsake him in this emergency. When his perturbation had a little subsided, he began to consider by what means he could extricate himself. He found means through those few of his servants who were permitted to go in and out of the castle, to send tempting messages and rich gifts to those of the duke's attendants who, he supposed, had most influence with their master. Amongst these was the

celebrated Philip de Comines, who became impressed with a great opinion of the king's wisdom, and perhaps also of his liberality. Comines afterwards quitted the service of the duke, and entered into that of the king, and has left us in the memoirs of his own times one of the ablest and most entertaining histories ever written.

In the mean time Charles was in a state of mind scarcely more enviable than that of Louis. On the first day he was almost like a madman, and it seemed as if nothing would appease him but the death of his victim. On the second day he became more calm, and held a council on the conduct to be observed towards his royal prisoner. This council lasted during the greater part of the day, and part of the night, but without coming to any determination. Charles was sometimes inclined to keep the king prisoner for life, and sometimes resolved to send him to his brother the duke of Berri. At other times he seemed as if he only wanted a little encouragement from his council to put him to death at once. During the whole of the third night he was in a perpetual agitation. He neither undressed himself nor slept, but kept alternately lying on his bed and walking up and down his apartment with Comines, who now and then threw in a word representing the impolicy as well as the dishonour of proceeding to extremities. He at length became more tractable, and towards

morning was so far pacified as to consent that the king should have his liberty, on conditions which were sufficiently humiliating, but which Louis was glad enough to accede to.

One of these conditions was, that he should give up to his brother the counties of Champagne and Brie; another was, that he should accompany the duke to Liege, and assist in quelling the insurrection which he had himself excited.

To Liege accordingly these two princes went, and there Charles gave a free rein to his passion. The insurgents were soon subdued, and the innocent and the guilty fell indiscriminately in the shocking butchery which followed. If Louis was capable of feeling any remorse or pity, he must have been touched at witnessing the miserable consequences which his own arts had brought on these unhappy people; but it is a point on which his annalists are silent. When the work of blood was over, and the duke's vengeance was sufficiently sated, he and Louis separated, with many fair words and compliments, and such a show of civility, as, considering the circumstances and the characters of the two men, was a mere mockery.

It added to the king's vexation at this result of his expedition to Peronne, that the Parisians were very facetious at his expense, and at the failure of all his fine contrivances. By way of being revenged on them, he deprived them of all the tame animals and birds they kept for their amusement;

and such was the meanness of his jealousy, that he had a register kept of every thing the parrots and other talking birds said, to find out if any of them had been taught to pronounce that unlucky word *Peronne*.

Now that Louis was once more safe in his own dominions, he was in no disposition to fulfil the conditions of the treaty which necessity had forced from him at *Peronne*. Not choosing to give to his brother Champagne and Brie, a territory which would place him near his ally the duke of Burgundy, he persuaded him to accept instead the duchy of Guienne. Charles was violently enraged at this infringement of the treaty, and was on the point of enforcing the observance of it, when the death of the duke de Berri in 1471 removed the subject of the dispute, although it did not prevent the war from breaking out.

The duke of Berri's death was occasioned by eating part of a poisoned peach, and Louis was strongly suspected of having contrived, or at least connived at it. Nothing was ever proved to confirm or clear away this suspicion, but Charles acted on the belief that it was a true one, and, to avenge his friend's death, carried the war into Picardy, where the unoffending inhabitants suffered the punishment of the crimes imputed to their unprincipled king.

This war, with the interruption of occasional truces, lasted many years; but I shall pass over

the particulars, which are rendered exceedingly intricate by the chicanery and double dealing of Louis of Luxembourg, count of Saint Pol. This man had been originally attached to the side of Burgundy, and took an active part with the confederates in the war for the public good. A short time before the treaty of Conflans, the king, in hopes to detach him from that party, offered him the sword of constable of France. Saint Pol accepted of the offer with great profession of loyalty to Louis, and at the same time he made Charles believe that he accepted it solely with the view of being the better able to be secretly serviceable to him.

In this manner did this perfidious man sell himself to two masters, betraying the secrets of the one to the other, and deceiving both. His chief object was to promote the war between France and Burgundy, because during a time of war his emoluments as constable were enhanced. At last, his treachery became so evident, that both Charles and Louis were equally convinced of it. And at a time when they happened to be in tolerable good humour with each other, they mutually agreed that whichever of them should first get the constable into his power should either put him to death in eight days, or else give him up to the other. When St. Pol heard of this agreement, he took good care to keep out of their way, and shut himself up in the town of St. Quentin, where he remained for some

time in security. At last, finding himself hard pressed by Louis, and thinking he was no longer safe at St. Quentin, he determined to trust himself to the more generous nature of the duke of Burgundy, and obtaining a safe conduct from him, he sought refuge in his territories. Louis instantly claimed his victim; Charles suffered his resentment against St. Pol to balance every other consideration, and delivered him up. He was conveyed to Paris, and condemned and executed as a traitor, Dec. 19, 1475, and never was any one less pitied or lamented.

Some months previous to the death of the constable, Edward IV. of England, to assist his ally the duke of Burgundy (who had married his sister), brought a numerous army into France, through "the ever open gate of Calais." Louis, who bore in mind the terrible days of Cressy and Agincourt, trembled at the thoughts of an English army in his kingdom, and resolved to spare no pains to get peaceably rid of them. He did not find this a very difficult matter. Edward had been pressed into the war against his inclinations, and being grown unwieldy and indolent, willingly listened to Louis's overtures, and unhesitatingly accepted of a considerable bribe, under the softened name of tribute, on consideration of returning with his army to England.

Louis did not content himself with bribing only the king. He secured the suffrages of Edward's

ministers by bestowing on them gifts and pensions. He treated the English during their stay in France with the greatest apparent respect and courtesy, though all the time he hated them in his heart. To keep the soldiers in good humour, he gave them a great entertainment at Amiens.

With "his good brother of England" he requested a personal interview; still, however, so much distrusting him that he did not venture to meet him otherwise than on a bridge (the bridge of Pequigni), with a grated barrier between them. In short, his conduct to the English cannot be better described than by comparing it to that of some timorous person who by coaxing words is trying to keep down a mastiff which he thinks is longing to fly at him. At last, the treaty being concluded at Pequigni, Aug. 29, 1475, Edward and his host departed, and Louis recovered from the terror he had been thrown into. A chief article of the peace was, that the son of the king of France should marry the king of England's eldest daughter.

The duke of Burgundy was much displeased at this treaty, and refused to be included in it. He, however, not long afterwards, made a truce with Louis for nine years. This truce he made because his ambition was now impelling him to turn his arms against his other neighbours.

He attacked the duke of Lorraine, and dispossessed him of his dominions. He invaded a part of Savoy, and he next endeavoured to subjugate

the Swiss: but from these hardy mountaineers he met with an unexpected repulse, and was defeated by them with great loss at Granson, April 5, 1476. This defeat, instead of checking his ambitious projects, only made him pursue them the more frantically, and against all prudent counsel; and with an inadequate force he rashly made another attack on the Swiss. But in a battle fought near Nancy, in January, 1477, his army was totally defeated, and he himself lost his life.

The circumstances of his death are truly tragical. He had for some time given his chief confidence to an Italian favourite named Campobasso, who, under a show of devoted attachment, had (from some cause which is not known, but which is commonly supposed to have been the having once received a blow from him) vowed his destruction. Campobasso had purposely, on many occasions, persuaded Charles into very impolitic measures, and now, in the field of Nancy, in the time of his greatest need, he withdrew with that part of the army which was under his command, and stationed some of his own creatures about the duke's person, with orders to kill him if they saw that he was likely to escape with life. These orders were but too well executed. The day after the battle the duke's body was found wounded in three places. He had fallen in a kind of morass with his face in the water, which in the night had frozen so hard that his body could not be extricated from it but by pickaxes.

The duke of Lorraine, who commanded the Swiss army, gave his fallen adversary an honourable funeral. To show the more respect, he wore his beard covered with gold leaf. What was something more in unison with the mournfulness of the occasion, he pronounced over the dead body, taking it by the hand, this short but simple oration:—"God rest thy soul; thou hast given us much trouble and grief."

Thus fell Charles the Bold, the last duke of Burgundy. By his death, his vast possessions, which extended from the northern limits of Holland to the frontiers of Switzerland, descended to his only child Mary, who, young and inexperienced, knew not how to contend with the difficulties with which she found herself environed. The resources of her country had been exhausted, and the bravest of her subjects had fallen in the late wars; and she was at once assailed by a tumultuous council, a disobedient people, and a powerful and vindictive enemy. That enemy was Louis, who made no attempts to conceal his joy at the duke of Burgundy's death. He instantly seized on the duchy of Burgundy, on the plea that in default of male heirs it had fallen to the crown of France; and at the same time he made an attack on some of Mary's towns in Picardy.

When the news of the duke's death arrived at Ghent, the citizens immediately took the government into their own hands. They slew the magi-

strates, and refused to acknowledge the young duchess's authority. As Mezerai expresses it, "being both proud and ignorant, they meddled with every thing, and did nothing but what was wrong."

The duchess placed her chief confidence in her mother-in-law (Margaret of York), and in a few of the ancient servants of her family. These persons, although they were her firm and attached friends, appear to have been but indifferent advisers. By their advice she tried to excite compassion and feelings of honour in the hard and insensible heart of Louis. She sent ambassadors to him with offers of peace, and wrote him a letter in which she promised to unite her dominions with those of France by a marriage with the dauphin, then a boy of eight years old. Louis, who preferred taking his own crooked ways, returned an ambiguous answer; and soon afterwards, when some deputies from the people of Ghent arrived at Paris, he gave them the duchess's letter, in the hope that it would embroil her with her subjects, who he knew would greatly resent her having offered to give up herself and her territories to France without their knowledge or consent.

It turned out as he had expected. When the deputies returned to Ghent they showed the duchess her letter in a public assembly, and vehemently reproached her for her conduct. Nor was that all; they condemned as traitors her chancellor Hugonet

and the lord of Imbercourt, by whose advice she had acted, and gave them only three hours to prepare for death.

The poor young duchess was in the deepest affliction. At once humiliated at the public disclosure of her negotiation with Louis, and driven to despair at the impending fate of her faithful servants, she ran about the market-place, where the scaffolds were erecting, and with dishevelled hair and disordered dress, she implored and entreated for their lives. But her entreaties were vain. They were executed almost in her sight. The citizens were now more overbearing than ever. They made the duchess their prisoner, debarred her from the company of her mother-in-law, and wished to force on her a husband of their own choosing. But in that particular Mary found means to elude their vigilance, and entered into a treaty of marriage with Maximilian, eldest son of the emperor Frederic III. The Flemings agreed to this marriage, which took place in 1477. They did not dispute Maximilian's authority over them while Mary lived; but on her death, in 1481, by a fall from her horse, they refused to submit any longer to his control.

Mary left two children, Philip and Margaret. The people of Ghent took these children under their own guardianship. They brought up the boy as their future duke, and making peace with Louis, they betrothed the little girl, who was not two

years old, to the dauphin, and sent her to be educated in France.

This event is said to have hastened the death of the king of England, who had so confidently built on his own daughter's marriage with the dauphin, that he had been accustomed to style her "the dauphiness."

Louis had now outlived all his most feared and hated rivals, and had, either by secret treachery or by open violence, arrived at a greater degree of power and authority than any of his predecessors had attained. But now was the time when, instead of enjoying, as he had hoped, the fruits of his labours, he was to pay the penalty of his crimes. His constitution was breaking down, and the fear of death filled him with indescribable horrors. He had the first warning of its dreaded approach in March, 1480, when, as he was sitting at dinner, he was suddenly deprived of speech and sense. He remained three days in that condition, and although he partially recovered from the effects of this attack, he never afterwards regained his former health. As his bodily strength declined the malevolence of his temper increased, and he became more jealous and suspicious than ever. Conscious, as he himself, in an exhortation to his son, acknowledged, "that he had grievously oppressed his people," he lived in continual dread of their retaliation. He shut himself up in his castle of Plessis,

near Tours, and in addition to the customary fortifications, caused it to be surrounded with ditches, in which were placed iron spikes; and not daring to trust to the fidelity of his own subjects, he had a band of foreign archers, who kept guard at the gate of the castle day and night. The castle could only be entered by a wicket, which admitted but one person at a time, and he suffered no person of rank to be lodged within it excepting the lord of Beaujeu, who had married his eldest and favourite daughter, and who, being a person of weak abilities, he supposed to be the less capable of forming dangerous machinations against him.

Louis had so great a dread of the nobles and princes of the blood, that although he detained the duke of Orleans and some others near his court, he treated them with distant coldness, and kept them in a sort of imprisonment. His chief and familiar associates were Oliver Daim, his barber, Tristan l'Hermite, his hangman, and Jacques Coctier, his physician. To the last of these this most tyrannical monarch was an absolute slave. The artful Jacques pretended that an astrologer had predicted that his death should take place a few days before that of the king, and the king consequently watched over his life with anxious care, loaded him with presents, and submitted to all his insolence and humours.

The more Louis was conscious of his declining state, the more he sought to conceal it from the world. Instead of the mean and sordid dress he

was accustomed to wear, he now put on magnificent apparel, and would take occasion to show himself at the windows of his castle, and then hastily withdraw himself, that the people who saw him might not have time to observe his meagre and altered looks. He imported from foreign countries many rare animals, which could not be procured without much expense and difficulty. He had dogs from Spain, lions from Barbary, elks and deer from Denmark and Sweden, and yet when they were obtained he cared not even to see them. But though he endeavoured to deceive others, he could not deceive himself. The nearer death approached, the more his dread of it increased. To ward it off he tried all the arts of superstition. He caused himself to be anointed with the holy oil from Rheims; he loaded himself with the relics of saints, and sent processions to their shrines; praying that they would prevent the north-east wind from blowing because it seemed to increase his disorder; but he placed his greatest hopes in a holy hermit of Calabria, who had the reputation of working miracles, and of restoring by his prayers the sick to health. He sent for him to Tours, and frequently on his knees besought him to prolong his life. The holy man in vain represented to him that the power of prolonging it lay only with God, and bade him turn his thoughts towards the next world, instead of thinking so exclusively of this.

Louis was at length sensible that these miserable struggles to avert the inevitable hand of death must soon terminate. Believing himself to be on the point of expiring, he ordered his chief officers to go to his son at Amboise, and to consider him as their master. He also sent with them his hawks and his hounds, and all that was then considered as forming the royal establishment.

He soon after felt momentarily a little revived, and would have recalled them, but death prevented his purpose. He died August 30, 1483, having lived sixty-one years, and reigned twenty-two.

When very young he was married to Margaret, daughter of James I. king of Scotland; but this princess, although amiable and gentle-tempered, never could acquire his regard, and died of grief, as it was said, at his neglect and unkindness.

His second wife, Charlotte of Savoy, was not more happy; and although he acknowledged that she was "a virtuous and loving wife," he treated her with harshness and inattention, alleging as his chief cause of being offended with her, that she expressed more compassion than he approved of for the house of Burgundy. By her he had three children, one son and two daughters:

Charles, who succeeded him;

Anne, married Pierre de Bourbon, lord of Beaujeu;

Joan, married the duke of Orleans.

Mezerai tells us, that Louis caused more than

four thousand persons to be put to death by different modes of execution, many of which he himself took pleasure in witnessing. He kept the cardinal de Balue for many years shut up in an iron cage, as a punishment for his numerous political intrigues; and only released him from his imprisonment on the cardinal's feigning himself at the point of death.

Louis added greatly to the territories of the crown of France. He won a considerable district from the house of Burgundy. The county of Boulogne he acquired by purchase. The counties of Maine and Anjou were bequeathed to him by Charles of Anjou, count of Maine; who also left to him the rich inheritance he had derived from his uncle Regnier of Anjou. This inheritance included Bar and Provence, together with the imaginary claims of the house of Anjou to the crown of Naples.

In this reign the art of printing was introduced into France.

CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XXIII.

George. What in the world could induce that count of Maine to leave his territories to such an old rogue as king Louis?

Mrs. Markham. It was possibly on the score of their relationship, and not from any feeling of

regard. The king's mother, Mary of Anjou, and the count's father were brother and sister : old Regnier of Anjou was another brother.

Richard. Pray, mamma, was not that Regnier of Anjou the father of our queen, Margaret of Anjou?

Mrs. M. He was. After spending the early part of his life in struggling to obtain the kingdom of Naples, he, in his old age, retired to Provence, and consoled himself for the loss of a crown by the amusement of a garden, and in the cultivation of plants. We may thank him for that lovely ornament of our gardens, the Provence rose.

Mary. I am sure that I, for one, am very much obliged to him.

Richard. I wonder if there ever was another man so coldhearted and wicked as this Louis the eleventh.

Mrs. M. The Roman emperor Tiberius seems to have very much resembled him. A striking parallel may be drawn between their two characters, and it is hard to say which was the worst.

Richard. Louis was the worst, because being a Christian he ought to have known better.

Mrs. M. His Christianity, I fear, did him little good. The fear and love of God, and the wish to serve him, was no part of the religion of Louis. *His* religion was the most abject superstition. He paid great devotion to the bones of saints, and

always carried some relics about his person. He also wore a little leaden image of the Virgin in his *barette* or cap, to which he frequently addressed his prayers. He had also many religious scruples, and amongst them was one of never making oath by the cross of St. Lo.

Mary. And what did he think there was wrong in that?

Mrs. M. It was not so much his fear of doing wrong, as of incurring danger, that made him avoid this oath. He believed that whoever made oath falsely by that cross would come to an untimely death before the end of the year. He was, therefore too prudent, to venture on doing any thing so rash.

George. There was something like conscience in that: he was not blind to his own faults.

Mrs. M. He was by no means without a conscience, and he took great pains to keep it clear by frequent confession. Philip de Comines was once present at an interview between the king and his priest, and drily observes, "that there was no great matter in the king's confession, for he had confessed himself not long before."

Louis, however, had one merit. Little as he respected justice in his own conduct, he was very rigorous in requiring his subjects to observe it towards one another. There are also two or three other praiseworthy things to be said of him. He

graciously received and protected those learned Greeks who, after the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, sought refuge in France.

He instituted parliaments at Dijon and at Bordeaux: and lastly he established posts and couriers in different parts of France for the conveyance of letters.

George. And that was the best thing he ever did.

Mrs. M. These posts had their origin from the king's restless and suspicious temper, and from his impatience to learn promptly whatever was passing in all parts of his kingdom. They were employed solely in the service of the king. It was not until 1630 that the letters of private individuals might be conveyed by the public posts.

Richard. There is one thing that puzzles me very much in the history of this king, and it is how so bad a man could find faithful and attached servants who would execute all his schemes.

Mrs. M. He had a wonderful skill in finding out the tempers and dispositions of those persons whom he wished to make use of, and had great art in binding them to his will, by means of their avarice, vanity, or self-love. Comines tells us, that one of his ways, when he wanted to gain any person, was to whisper, as if confidentially, in his ear, which gave him importance in his own eyes and in those of others, who would look on him as intrusted with important affairs. He had also a way of

cajoling by a pleasant and facetious humour, which he could at all times command. He could also, when he chose it, overawe and confound those whom he conversed with by his keen and sarcastic wit ; and lastly, he could, as he saw occasion, be liberal in his gifts, and severe in his punishments ; so that, between hope and fear, he kept all whom he employed in a very strict dependence on his will.

George. I shall have greater pleasure in reading that entertaining book *Quentin Durward*, now that I know so much more about *Louis XI.*

Mrs. M. The historical parts of that very delightful novel must not be read as real history, for the ingenious author has not thought it necessary to adhere critically to fact, and has in many places accommodated the history to his story, instead of giving himself the trouble to make his story accommodate itself to history. The character of *Louis*, which forms so conspicuous a part of the book, is drawn throughout in a very masterly manner, and is evidently taken from the memoirs of *Comines*.

Richard. Will you be so kind as to read us a little of *Comines's* book ? It must be very entertaining.

Mrs. M. You shall have a part of his account of the king's last illness.

“ Our king was now at Plessis, with little company but his archers :—to look upon him one would have thought him rather a dead than a living man ; he was grown so lean, it was scarce credible.

“ His clothes were now richer and more magni-

ficent than they had been before ; his gowns were all of crimson satin, lined with rich martins' furs, of which he gave to several, without being demanded ; for no person durst ask a favour, or scarce speak to him of any thing. He inflicted very severe punishments, for fear of losing his authority, as he himself told me. He removed officers, disbanded soldiers, retrenched pensions, and sometimes took them away quite. So that, as he told me not many days before his death, he passed his time in making and ruining men ; which he did in order to be talked of, and that his subjects might take notice he was not yet dead."

George. That was a mighty singular amusement for a dying man, methinks.

Mary. There was something very melancholy in the death of the duke of Burgundy. I could not help being very sorry for him.

Mrs. M. It was scarcely possible for two human beings to be more totally opposite than were Charles and Louis ; they had only one common quality, and that was ambition.

Richard. And even their ambition was very different. In Louis it was thriving and prosperous, and in Charles it was everything that was ruinous.

Mrs. M. The riches and prosperity of the Netherlands, before that country was ruined by the misconduct of Charles, exceeded that of any other people of Europe. Bruges, Antwerp, and Arras, which last city was famous for its tapestry, were

the staples of the northern nations. The dukes of Burgundy were more powerful than many kings, and their courts were the most splendid in Europe.

After the battle of Nanci, an immense quantity of the rich spoil of the Burgundians fell into the hands of the Swiss, who, unaccustomed to the refinements of luxury, did not know what to do with it. They garnished their miserable huts with pieces of beautiful and costly embroidery; and so little knowledge had they of gold, that many of them bartered pieces of that valuable metal for copper, which they esteemed the more useful of the two.

Richard. They were probably very happy in their ignorance.

Mrs. M. There is a singular history relating to a diamond which once belonged to Charles of Burgundy. The story is this. Charles wore this valuable jewel in his hat at the battle of Nanci. It was found amongst the spoil by a Swiss soldier, who sold it to a French gentleman of the name of Sancy. In his family it remained above a hundred years, until a descendant of the family, who was captain of the Swiss soldiers in the service of Henry III., was employed by that monarch to procure him a reinforcement of soldiers from Switzerland. The king, being driven from his throne by a league which was formed against him amongst his subjects, was so totally without resources, that he was unable to send any money for the payment of the troops. He therefore borrowed Sancy's

family jewel, which was to be sent into Switzerland as a pledge. Sancy sent the diamond by one of his own servants, but he and the diamond both disappeared. The king reproached Sancy for his credulity in trusting so valuable a treasure to a menial; and he, piqued both for his own credit and that of his servant, in whose fidelity he had implicit reliance, set out in search of him. He found that he had been waylaid and murdered, and that his body was concealed in a forest. Sancy, still confident in the poor fellow's zeal and integrity, caused the body to be disinterred and opened; when it was found, that to preserve the jewel from the robbers, he had swallowed it. This diamond, which went by the name of "the Sancy," afterwards became the property of the crown. It was stolen in the general wreck of French royalty at the revolution, and no one now knows what has become of it.

Mary. I only hope it will never come into my possession. I should not like to wear an ornament having such a melancholy history, and which seemed to bring misfortune on all who possessed it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHARLES VIII., SURNAMED L'AFFABLE.

[Years after Christ, 1483—1498.]



A courtier of the fifteenth century.

Charles VIII.

As Charles was in his fourteenth year, and might, according to the French law, have been considered old enough to rule alone, the late king had not appointed a regency. In consideration, however, of his son's weak health and backwardness of mind, he placed him under the guardianship of the lady of Beaujeu.

The princes of the blood, and more particularly the duke of Orleans, jealous of the power which Anne thus acquired, called an assembly of the states at Tours, with the hope of displacing her. Contrary to their expectation, the states confirmed her authority ; but to pacify the nobles, a council of ten, of which the duke of Orleans was to be the head, was appointed to assist her in the government. Anne soon showed this council that their office was merely nominal, and took into her own hands the whole management of affairs. She was a very clever, strong-headed woman, and possessed great talents, with perhaps a little too much of her father's politic spirit. She had not, however, his cunning or malevolence, and was, on the whole, a very fine character. She was, at this time, only twenty-two years old, but she cheerfully relinquished all the usual amusements of her age and sex, and gave herself up entirely to the business of the state. Her chief difficulty arose at first from the conduct of the duke of Orleans, who gave her many provocations, which she, having a high spirit, violently resented ; and, at last, things came to that pass between them, that Orleans, believing his liberty in danger, fled to the court of Bretagne, and put himself under the protection of the duke.

Bretagne was, at that time, governed by Francis II., the last male descendant of John de Montfort. He had no sons ; and the kings of France had begun

to cast their eyes on that most desirable fief, which was now the only one which remained independent. The last descendants of the family of Blois had ceded to Louis XI. all their supposed claims on Bretagne, and the lady of Beaujeu and her young brother, who was early awakened to ambition, held themselves in readiness to urge these claims on the first opportunity. In furtherance of these designs, Charles entered into an alliance with some malcontent Bretons, and under pretence of assisting them, sent a large body of troops into Bretagne, who took possession of several towns for the king. The Bretons now saw their error in choosing such a dangerous ally. They reconciled themselves with their duke, and he, joining his forces with theirs, assembled a numerous army, which encountered the French near Saint Aubin, July 28, 1488. The result of this battle was fatal to the Bretons. The duke of Orleans, who was fighting on their side, was taken prisoner; and the lady of Beaujeu, who had not forgot her own particular grudge, caused him to be closely imprisoned in the great tower of the castle of Bourges; and, to make his captivity doubly sure, she had him shut up every night in an iron cage.

The duke of Bretagne was completely broken down by his defeat at Saint Aubin. He made peace with Charles on very disadvantageous terms, and died soon after from the effects of vexation.

He left two daughters, one of whom died soon after her father. His other daughter, Anne, now sole heiress of the duchy, was only thirteen years old, but she possessed a strong and vigorous mind far beyond her years, and conducted herself with wonderful firmness and rectitude under very difficult and trying circumstances.

The Bretons were in no condition to contend in arms with the king of France, and were urgent with their young duchess to marry, and give them a legal protector. Some of them pressed her to fulfil an engagement which her father had made for her with the seigneur d'Albret, whose brother had married the heiress of Navarre. Others, who had been gained over to the French interest, solicited her to terminate all her difficulties by marrying Charles. Anne was herself averse to both these alliances. D'Albret was old enough to be her grandfather, and was notorious for his bad temper; and Charles she regarded with particular aversion, as the enemy of herself and her race. In this perplexity she resolved to choose for herself, and selected the archduke Maximilian from amongst the list of her suitors. The archduke's character for easy good-nature appears to have been one cause which prepossessed her in his favour. The marriage took place, by proxy, in 1489. But either from indolence, which was always Maximilian's bane, or that he was beset by other more pressing cares, he neither came to claim his bride, nor sent any troops to her aid. Charles,

meantime, was preparing to advance into Bretagne; and Anne, receiving no succour from Maximilian, applied to Henry VII. of England, on whom she thought she had a claim of gratitude for the protection which her father had given him in his distress. But Henry was cautious and tardy; and Anne saw that she would have long to wait for his assistance.

In these circumstances Charles renewed his suit for her hand; but Anne, in addition to her former reluctance to marry him, now felt herself the affianced wife of the archduke.

Charles, believing that the duke of Orleans might, from his former acquaintance, have some influence with her, released him from prison, and sent him into Bretagne. He himself soon followed with a numerous army, and encamped at the gates of Rennes, where the duchess was keeping her little court.

Anne, thus neglected by her betrothed husband, and ill assisted by her cold ally, now began to waver in the purpose she had formed. Charles, through the intervention of Orleans, entered the city *incognito*, and was admitted to see her. It might be said of Anne, as Shakspeare has said of her namesake, in his play of Richard III.,

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?

Was ever woman in this humour won?

The result of the conference was, that she consented to marry him. The determination was received by

the Bretons with great satisfaction. They stipulated with Charles for the preservation of their laws and privileges, and the marriage took place December 10, 1491. Thus was Bretagne annexed to the crown, and the whole of France, after a lapse of many centuries, again united under one sovereign. Anne soon forgot her former prejudices against Charles ; she loved him for his many amiable qualities, and made him an excellent and affectionate wife.

Charles, at the time of his marriage, was twenty-two years old. He had, for some time past, withdrawn himself from the tutelage of his sister ; he, nevertheless, always continued to treat her with respect and affection, and, in matters of importance, would generally ask her advice ; though, unhappily for himself and his kingdom, he did not always follow it. This young prince was of a gay, lively nature, but so thoughtless and inconsiderate, and so deficient in judgment, that though he seems to have set out in life with one of the best hearts in the world, he was continually guilty of very unjustifiable actions. One of his follies was that of being always eager after some new scheme, which he would pursue for a time with great ardour, and would then relinquish as inconsiderately as he took it up. He commonly acted from the impulse of the moment, was seldom to be convinced by reason, and had an invincible repugnance to business. Notwithstanding these great defects, Charles made

himself much beloved. He was generous and forgiving to excess; and had so gentle a temper, that it is recorded of him, that he never, in the course of his life, said a single word which could give pain to any human being. His faults might, in all probability, be attributed to his want of education. His early years had been passed in a kind of imprisonment in the castle of Amboise. His mean-spirited and jealous father, fearing that his son might at some time or other become his rival, gave him no instructors, and placed only low and unworthy persons about him. When he became king, he did not even know how to read. He endeavoured afterwards to supply the deficiencies of his education, and when he was about seventeen or eighteen years old, he applied diligently to study during several months. Then, either from the persuasions of his young companions, who thought that a studious king would make a very dull master, or else from the changeableness of his own disposition, he threw aside his books, and gave himself up to every kind of dissipation and frivolity.

You may suppose that Charles's marriage with the duchess of Bretagne caused both displeasure and surprise in Maximilian, whose daughter, you may remember, had been sent into France as Charles's affianced bride. Maximilian therefore felt himself doubly injured both in his daughter's person and in his own; but not being in a condition to declare war openly, he contented himself

with taking the towns of St. Omers and Arras by stratagem, and entered into an alliance with Henry VII., who at last, when it was too late, landed in France with a numerous force, and laid siege to Boulogne.

Charles, whose mind was now eagerly running on a new scheme, hastened to rid himself of these enemies, which he did without much difficulty. Maximilian was pacified by receiving his daughter again, with all the towns that were to have been her dower; and Henry, who was no warrior, gladly relinquished his projected conquest in France for a considerable sum of money, and returned home.

The project on which Charles was now bent was no other than the conquest of Naples, to which kingdom he pretended to have a claim, in right of the earl of Maine's bequest to his father. Perhaps this claim would have been suffered to remain dormant, if it had not been for the artifices of Ludovico Sforza, a man whose character stood pre-eminent (even in that age, when such qualities were but too common) for perfidy, ingratitude, and cruelty. Ludovico was uncle to Galeazzo, the reigning duke of Milan, and wanted to destroy his nephew, and get possession of the duchy for himself. He was, however, prevented from making any attempt against the young duke by the fear of drawing upon himself the vengeance of Ferdinand, king of Naples, whose grand-daughter Galeazzo had married. He therefore gladly fanned

the flame of ambition which perhaps his arts had first lighted in the inconsiderate mind of Charles, and encouraged him to make an invasion of Naples.

It was in vain that the lady of Beaujeu, or the duchess of Bourbon, as she was now become, by the death of the lord of Beaujeu's elder brother, and all Charles's other most prudent advisers, represented to him the folly and madness of such a scheme. He was obstinately bent upon it. During two years it was the constant subject of debate in the royal council. At last, after many changes of plans, it was finally determined on, and the king accordingly set out on this great enterprise in the autumn of 1494, but with so little preparation that he could only collect an army of 18,000 troops, with little money and with no provisions for a campaign. Besides these troops, indeed, he was accompanied by a great number of young noblemen, who served as volunteers—a class of soldiers which might perhaps be useful in a day of battle, but which were a hindrance rather than a help in a long campaign, as being less able to endure fatigue, and less willing to submit to control, than the regular army.

The Italian princes had had ample notice of the intended invasion, and might easily have crushed it; but they trusted that it would end in mere idle talk, and therefore made but little preparation against it. Ferdinand, king of Naples, and his son Alfonso, duke of Calabria, were men of the

most notorious vices, as was also the pope, Alexander VI., and it seemed (to quote the words of Mezerai) "as if God had blindfolded their eyes and tied down their hands, and raised up this young prince to chastise them, who came with a small force, and was governed by a brainless council."

Charles crossed the Alps, and reached Asti, in Piedmont. Here he fell ill of the small-pox, which detained him some time. By the end of October he was sufficiently recovered to continue his march; but when he arrived at Turin his resources were so completely expended, that he was obliged to borrow the duchess of Savoy's and the marchioness of Montferrat's jewels, to raise money on them to pay his troops.

At Vigeva Charles was joined by his faithless ally Ludovico Sforza, who stayed with him till he was assured of the success of a dose of poison, which he had a short time before found means to give to his nephew. As soon as he heard that Galeazzo was dead, he hastened to Milan and took possession of the dukedom, in violation of the rights of the infant, son of the deceased duke.

Galeazzo and Charles were sisters' children, and some of the council urged the king to proceed immediately to Milan to avenge his cousin's death and punish the usurper. But Charles's whole mind was set on conquering Naples, and he was not to be turned from it. He proceeded on his march, and wherever he came he proclaimed himself "The

friend of freedom, and the enemy of tyrants." Every gate was opened to him as he passed, and he was received in triumph into Florence and Rome. In January, 1495, he approached the confines of the Neapolitan territory. The old king Ferdinand was now dead, and had been succeeded by his son Alfonso.

When Alfonso heard that Charles had actually quitted Rome, and was advancing towards Naples, his terror was so excessive as in a manner to bereave him of his senses. While the French were yet many miles distant, he would fancy that he heard them in the streets, and that the very stones cried out, "France! France!" which was the war-cry of the French soldiers. He would not await their coming, and abandoning the throne to his son Ferdinand, he fled to Messina, and shut himself up in a monastery. Here, without taking the vows, he practised all the austerities of a monk, hoping thereby to expiate the sinfulness of his former life. The rigorous discipline which he imposed on himself, occasioned disorders which soon terminated his miserable existence. Alfonso had amassed immense riches by every species of cruelty and fraud; and it is singular that when he fled from Naples he showed no anxiety to save anything except some garden-seeds.

Ferdinand was a prince of great promise, and it was hoped that he would retrieve the character of his family, which, for several generations, had been

notorious for its vices. When the French approached Naples he marched to meet them at the head of his troops; but at the first sight of the enemy he was seized with a sudden panic, and fled back to the town. The Neapolitans shut the gates against him, and the terrified prince took refuge in the island of Ischia.

Charles in the mean time entered Naples, and was received by the inhabitants as their deliverer from oppression. Every place in the Neapolitan dominions, with the exception of Brindisi, Reggio, and Gallipoli, yielded to him, and he achieved this great conquest without striking a single blow.

This brilliant success absolutely turned the heads of the king and his council. Every kind of business and affair of state was neglected: nothing was thought of but diversions and feasting. Little care was taken to preserve the towns that had submitted. To some few, indeed, garrisons and a governor were sent; but these persons, following the example of the king, were more occupied with their pleasures than with their duties. The soldiers lived at discretion, the stores were squandered, the inhabitants were ill treated, their goods pillaged, and their rights disregarded; and the Neapolitans found their new masters even worse than their old ones, and that these professed friends of freedom were indeed very tyrants.

The princes in the other parts of Italy now began to recover from the panic which the irruption

of the French had thrown them into. The pope, the Venetians, and Ludovico Sforza, who now no longer needed the French, and wished to get rid of them, entered into a confederacy to drive them out of Italy. They were joined by Ferdinand, king of Aragon, and by Maximilian, who, by the death of his father, was now emperor of Germany.

Philip de Comines was at that time at Venice on a mission from Charles, and he repeatedly warned his master of what was going on; but Charles was too much immersed in amusements to give heed to the warning, until the news reached him that a treaty had been actually signed by the confederate powers. He then thought it necessary to take care of himself, and resolved to retrace his steps to France. About 4000 of his troops he left in Calabria and Naples under the command of the count d'Aubigny and of Gilbert de Bourbon, duke de Montpensier, to the last of whom he gave the title of viceroy of Naples. Charles departed on the 20th of May with his diminished army, and reached Pisa without meeting with any impediment. Here he halted for a reinforcement of 9000 men which he had ordered the duke of Orleans to bring from Asti. But after waiting twelve or fifteen days he learned that the duke of Orleans was in no condition to bring him the expected succour, being closely blockaded in the town of Novarra by Sforza. The following was the cause of his being in that unfortunate predicament. Orleans, in right

of his grandmother Valentina, had a claim to the duchy of Milan, and instead of leading the troops under his command to join the king, he could not resist the temptation which offered itself of making himself master of the town of Novarra, in the Milanese. He took the town, but before he had time to get it provisioned, he was shut up in it by Ludovico's troops, and driven to the last extremities of famine.

Charles having obtained some small reinforcements, which after all did not make his army exceed 9,000 men, now pushed forwards towards Piedmont. His delay at Pisa had given the confederates time to concentrate their forces, which now amounted to 40,000 men, commanded by the marquis of Mantua. But even with this superior force the Italians did not venture to attack the French until they reached Fornova, where the confederate troops stationing themselves in a valley through which the French must necessarily pass, waited for their approach. Charles now had his first opportunity of showing himself to be a soldier. He came in view of the enemy July 6th, 1495, and rushing forwards with inconceivable bravery, he and his little army broke through their ranks and pursued their way, with the inconsiderable loss of only eighty men, leaving 3000 of the enemy slain. Nine days afterwards he reached Asti, where he remained some time to refresh himself. He here commenced a treaty with Sforza,

who permitted the duke of Orleans to leave Novarra. Charles, although the most generous and forgiving of men, never thoroughly forgave Orleans for letting his private interests interfere with his public duty, and ever afterwards treated him with a degree of coolness. Heartily weary of military enterprises, and impatient to enjoy the pleasures of peace at home, the king scarcely stayed to conclude his treaty with Sforza, and hastened to Lyons, where, forgetting all weightier cares, he plunged into every kind of dissipation.

In the mean while Ferdinand of Naples had issued from his retreat at Ischia. He applied to Ferdinand, king of Aragon, to assist him in expelling the French from the Neapolitan dominions, and that monarch sent him a body of Spanish troops, commanded by Gonsalvo de Cordova, surnamed "the Great Captain." The French commanders made what resistance they could; but receiving no reinforcements were soon overpowered. Ferdinand was reinstated in Naples, and before the end of the year 1496, nothing remained of Charles's boasted conquests in Italy.

These calamities roused the whole French nation to a desire of avenging the honour of their country; and Charles was awoke from his dream of pleasure, and loudly called on to renew the war. He collected an army, and prepared to take the command of it. Previous to his departure on this new expedition, he went to the abbey of Saint

Denis, to take leave of the holy saints and martyrs who there lie buried. He then proceeded as far as Lyons, on his way into Italy, and some of the advanced cavalry had already crossed the Alps, when suddenly the king's mind was changed, the enterprise was suspended, and afterwards was wholly laid aside. Many different causes are given for this relinquishment of the Italian war. Some persons attribute it to the king's displeasure with the duke of Orleans, who, it is said, could not conceal his satisfaction at the death of the king's only son, who died about this time; but perhaps the change of plans may be sufficiently accounted for by the natural fickleness of Charles's temper, and the increasing feebleness of his health, which made him unequal to any active exertion.

The king now pursued an entirely new course of conduct. He forsook all his former frivolous diversions, and seemed desirous to live only for the good of his people: he set about reforming the abuses of the government; he established a supreme council; he dismissed all unjust judges and unworthy persons from their offices; he attended himself to the complaints of the poor; he also meditated on making a great reduction in the taxes, and it was his intention to have limited his expenditure within the revenues derived from the royal domains, and from the ancient rights of the crown. But before he could execute these good resolutions his life was suddenly cut short.

One day, when he and the queen were at Amboise, some of the noblemen of the court were diverting themselves with playing at tennis in the fosse of the castle. Charles led the queen into a gallery from whence she could see the players. The doorway of this gallery, which Comines describes as nothing more than a dirty passage-room, was very low, and the king in entering struck his head against it. He, however, took no notice of the blow, but entered into conversation with the persons assembled there. To one of them he said, that he hoped never to commit another wilful sin as long as he lived. While he was speaking these words, he was suddenly seized with a sort of apoplexy, and fell down without sense or motion. He was laid upon a pallet bed which happened to be in the place, and expired in a few hours. He was in the twenty-eighth year of his age, and had reigned fifteen years. He married Ann of Bretagne, by whom he had three children, who all died in their infancy.

Charles had a very indifferent figure, and, with the exception of his eyes, which were sharp and brilliant, his face was exceedingly plain. His speech also was defective, and he spoke slowly and with difficulty ; but the kindness of his manner and the sprightliness of his humour made these, as well as the more serious faults of his character, to be overlooked ; and never was any man more personally beloved. It is even said, that two of his attendants

were so much overwhelmed with grief at his death, that when they saw his body committed to the grave they dropped down dead. /

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CONVERSATION ON CHAPTER XXIV.

Richard. I think the conquest of Naples, by Charles, was one of the most extraordinary things you have yet told us. What a set of poltroons those Italian princes must have been! to let him march with a mere handful of men from one end of Italy to the other, and back again, without making any attempt to stop him, till just at the very last.

Mrs. Markham. Philip de Comines, in his account of the expedition, declares, that "the whole voyage was a mystery conducted by God himself."

George. I am very glad we have not yet lost sight of our old friend Comines.

Mrs. M. Poor Comines experienced a variety of fortunes. In the minority of Charles VIII., he fell under the displeasure of the lady of Beaujeu, who kept him prisoner during three years, the greater part of which time he was shut up in an iron cage.

Mary. What had he done to offend her?

Mrs. M. He had entered into a secret correspondence with the duke of Orleans, who was then an exile in Bretagne. The king, when he took the reins of government into his own hands, restored Comines to favour, and employed him on several important occasions. He was present at the battle of Fornova, and has given a full account of it.

George. Perhaps he has told us how it was that nine thousand French could make their way through an army of forty thousand Italians, and with scarcely any loss.

Mrs. M. Several causes combined to favour the escape of the French. The valley was only a mile and a half wide, and the enemy's troops were hemmed in, and hampered by their own numbers. Their thirst of plunder was also another cause of their overthrow; for instead of opposing the advanced troops of the French, the Italians were more intent in falling on the baggage in the rear, which they completely pillaged. Charles, on this occasion, not only lost all his Italian spoil, but also the holy relics which he had carried from France, and which, it seemed, always accompanied the royal presence. But what was at that moment the most serious matter of all, was the loss of his provisions, a loss by which his army was reduced to the greatest distress. And, although he gained his passage through the valley of Fornova, he found the hardest part of his labour yet to come, and had a

most terrible march to Asti, which Comines describes in very feeling terms.

Mary. Will you, if you please, tell us what he says?

Mrs. M. The whole would be too long; I will, however, read to you one passage, which will give you some idea of the not unfrequent sufferings of a retreating army. "Our marches were long, and our drink nothing but standing water that stank; and yet our men were so greedy, they ran themselves up to the waist to come at it. The king always marched before day, but never took a guide with him, nor baited till it was noon, and then he dined; and those that attended him took what care they could of themselves. No man in the whole army, though of the best quality, was excused from looking to his own horse, but every one brought his own hay or straw in his arms: twice I did it myself, and was two days without eating anything but bread, and that none of the best. It was the most painful and incommodious march I ever made, though I have been in several bad enough with Charles duke of Burgundy. We marched no faster than our artillery, and were forced often to halt on purpose to mend them, which, besides the deficiency of horses to draw them, incommoded us extremely. —We were in no want of good officers, and men of experience, in the army; but (as fortune would have it) they had no authority with the king, who was young and untractable: so that, to conclude,

our Saviour, Jesus Christ, did most manifestly reserve the glory of that voyage to himself."

Richard. There is one thing in the history of our old friend Comines which I don't quite like; and that was, his leaving his old master Charles to enter into the service of Louis XI.

Mrs. M. There is a story told of Comines, which, if it be true, accounts for his quitting the court of Burgundy. The story is, that Comines, presuming on the freedoms which the duke permitted him to take, one day desired him to pull off his boots for him.

George. And what did the duke do?

Mrs. M. He did as he was desired, and then gave Comines such a hearty drubbing with the boots, that the discomfited courtier could never more appear in his presence.

Mary. Do you know, mamma, what were the amusements in which this king Charles VIII. spent so much of his time?

Mrs. M. He was passionately fond of dancing, of tournaments, and of theatrical exhibitions.

George. I cannot think how he could like those tedious mysteries and moralities.

Mrs. M. Mysteries and moralities were, at this time, superseded by a more lively kind of theatrical amusement, more suited to the natural character of the French. Several of the gay young men of Paris formed themselves into companies for the performance of short lively pieces, the object of

which was to turn into ridicule their acquaintance, or sometimes the public characters of the day. One of these companies was composed of young lawyers, and was called "les clerks de la Basoche." Another, which was formed from amongst the principal citizens of Paris, was called "les Enfants sans Souci," and was under the management of a chief who bore the distinguished title of the *prince of fools*. The performances of these gentlemen actors were exceedingly captivating to the Parisians, who flocked in crowds to witness them.

Mary. Were these entertaining plays exhibited in churches?

Mrs. M. No; they were exhibited in halls, which served as theatres,—not such theatres as ours; for there was no division between the stage and the part appropriated to the audience; and the actors, when they were not wanted on the stage, sat amongst the audience.

Richard. Were the French people as fond of disguisements as the English were?

Mrs. M. They seem to have been fond of every kind of amusement, and to have had a greater variety of diversions than the English. The lower orders of the French, and particularly the Parisians, were very fond of processions. One of their favourite festivals was the procession of the Giant, which was annually celebrated on the 3rd of July. An enormous figure of a giant, twenty feet high,

with a poniard in his hand, was paraded about the streets, and finally burnt in the rue aux Ours, with fireworks, and other great signs of rejoicing.

George. Had this giant ever wanted to blow up the parliament, that they treated him as we do Guy Faux?

Mrs. M. The story is, that this giant is meant to represent a certain soldier (I cannot tell you his name) who, in a fit of desperation at losing his money at play, rushed into the street and struck his poniard into an image of the Virgin, which stood at the corner of la rue aux Ours. Blood instantly gushed from the wounded image. The people who saw the miracle seized on the soldier, and binding him on a gallows, stabbed him to death; and, in commemoration of this event, instituted the procession of "the giant."—This is the account given by popular tradition. The learned say that the festival is nothing more than a relic of paganism, which has descended to the French from the Roman colonists in Gaul. There was another favourite ceremony, which was derived from the same source, and that was the procession of the *Bœuf gras*; in which a bull was adorned with branches and flowers, as were the bulls of old, when led to sacrifice. A child, decked out in ribands, was placed upon his back, and he was led about the streets, preceded by instruments of music.

Richard. This custom is not yet left off. Don't

you remember there is an account of it in one of those entertaining stories in Highways and Byeways?

Mrs. M. There was another annual festival which happily no longer exists, and which was much more reprehensible than either the Giant or the Bœuf gras. This festival was called the feast of the Ass. A young woman with a child in her arms, was seated on an ass, and was led in a procession, with the bishop and clergy at its head, to the church or cathedral. There mass was said by the priests; but instead of the usual responses, the people answered by loud cries of "Hinha! hinha!" in imitation of the braying of an ass. This was meant for a representation of the flight into Egypt.

Richard. How shockingly disgusting and profane!

Mrs. M. This feast of the Ass was at one time adopted in England, but was never, I believe, permitted after the eleventh century, when Grostête, bishop of Lincoln, forbade its celebration in his cathedral. In France it was not left off till the end of the sixteenth century.

George. I am very glad to find the English were better than the French, even so long ago.

Mrs. M. I should be very glad if it was the ambition of every Englishman to——

George. Ah! mamma, I am almost certain I know what you were going to say.

Mrs. M. Well, what was I going to say?

George. That it ought to be our ambition to try to surpass the French in the excellence of our moral and religious conduct and principles, still more than by superior courage and warlike skill.

Mrs. M. You have guessed right, my dear boy; and I hope you will always bear this sentiment in mind.

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